

THE LIFE AND LITERARY CAREER  
OF W. STANLEY HOUGHTON 1881-1913

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by

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A thesis presented for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
at the University of Salford

Department of Modern Languages  
1984

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A work of this nature is dependent on others and for this reason I am most grateful to the following: Professor Angus Easson for all his help, advice and considered opinions; Mrs. Dorothy Caw for her generosity in allowing me access to Houghton's papers, particularly those previously unknown or unlisted and enabling the University of Salford to purchase the entire collection; Gail, my wife, for her patience and fortitude during the long periods of isolation. I am also indebted to those who either replied to letters or granted interviews during the course of the research. All are acknowledged where appropriate in the footnotes. Finally, I would like to thank the Keeper of Manuscripts at the John Rylands University of Manchester Library (Deansgate) and the Librarian of the Arts Library of Manchester Central Reference Library, St. Peter's Square, for allowing me access to the several collections in their keeping.

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of the life and literary career of W. Stanley Houghton. Its overall aim is to bring together, for the first time, as complete a history as possible of all his work: plays, dramatic criticisms, essays, sketches and short stories, and at the same time plot his short life and thereby provide a detailed biography of the kind not previously available.

It begins by tracing the family history, his birth and early life. Then follows his occupation along with his early works and the experiences he gained from the Manchester Athenaeum Dramatic Society. His method of composition is also discussed. Consideration is then given to Manchester's heritage in order to highlight its appeal for Miss Horniman and Iden Payne whose influential repertory theatre led directly to Houghton writing his first professional plays. Harold Brighouse is discussed in some detail because he was Houghton's close friend and because no standard biography exists of him. The part played by The Manchester Guardian is then assessed because of its influence in the development of literary criticism and because Houghton contributed many such literary articles to it. There he met some of the paper's highly respected critics who later featured in his life, particularly A.N. Monkhouse, and these too are appraised.

A detailed study of each of the plays is then made with some grouped together for particular reasons; others have chapters to themselves whilst his most famous play, Hindle Wakes, has the longest chapter of all. A study of his life in London and Paris as a result of his fame

is made, and his prose works, both for their intrinsic merit and the insight they offer into his drama, are considered. The conclusion puts his era into perspective and establishes his place in the development of British drama by outlining his particular skills and the contributions he made.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

### The Works

Harold Brighthouse (Ed),  
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(3 Vols.), Constable, 1914.

### Introduction

'Introduction' by Harold Brighthouse,  
The Works of Stanley Houghton,  
Vol.1, pp.IX-LIX.

### H.C. Vol.

Miss A.E.F. Horniman's Newspaper  
Clippings in 17 Volumes (A-Q) in  
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Manchester Library (Deansgate)

### ANM

The Allan Noble Monkhouse Collection  
in the John Rylands University of  
Manchester Library (Deansgate).  
The number used each time refers to  
the box containing that particular  
information.

### Dean Collection

The Basil Dean Collection in the  
John Rylands University of Manchester  
Library (Deansgate). This recently  
acquired Collection is only broadly  
classified at present.

### Montague Collection

The Charles Edward Montague Collection  
in the John Rylands University of  
Manchester Library (Deansgate).  
Items numbered 15, 19, 20, 21, 22.

### Brighthouse Collection

The Harold Brighthouse Collection in  
Eccles Public Library, Greater  
Manchester. Generally unclassified.

### Blanton Collection

A private collection belonging to  
Miss H. Blanton of Didsbury, Greater  
Manchester.

### Cade Collection

A private collection belonging to  
Mrs. Elizabeth Cade of Fairlight,  
Hastings, E. Sussex.

The Stanley Houghton Collection

Plays, contracts, photographs and miscellaneous items in the University of Salford Library.

Theatre Collection

A large collection of Manchester's theatrical history including Miss Horniman's Gaiety Theatre in Manchester Central Reference Library, St. Peter's Square. The main index classification is Th.f 792.094273. Individual suffixes are given in the footnotes.

Pogson

Rex Pogson, Miss Horniman and the Gaiety Theatre Manchester, Rockliff, 1952.

O.C.T.

Phyllis Hartnoll (Ed), The Oxford Companion to the Theatre, OUP, 1967 (3rd Edn.).

Gaberthuel

Marcel Gaberthuel, William Stanley Houghton 1881-1913 : Eine Untersuchung Seiner Dramen, Buchdruckerei Gassman Ag, Solothurn, 1973 (published Ph.D. thesis : University of Freiburg, Switzerland).

MGS Register

Manchester Grammar School : a biographical register of Old Mancunians 1888-1951, Rawson, 1965.

Index to Literary Contributions

Payment ledgers (3 Vols) of The Manchester Guardian recording all articles submitted to the paper for publication along with dates and fees. Kept in the University of Manchester Archives.

L.C.P.

The Lord Chamberlain's Stage Plays: plays submitted for licence and kept in bound volumes (numbered) in The British Museum Archives.

(£ in 1981)

The figures in brackets after contemporary money figures represent the equivalent amount of money needed in 1981 for the same purchasing power. The intention is to give an intuitive feel for value: it is merely impressionistic and must be viewed as such. The figures, whilst only approximate, are those arrived at using a formula put out by the Central Statistical Office, Great George Street, London. The formula used is the 'unofficial' Price Index 1750-1914 (January 1974 = 100): (see below)

$$\frac{100\% \times \text{later annual average RPI} - \text{earlier annual 'unofficial' PI}}{\text{earlier annual 'unofficial' PI}}$$

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## INTRODUCTION

George Rowell ends his study of the history of drama and theatre from the late Nineteenth Century to the outbreak of World War One with a statement that has a direct bearing on this thesis:

*By the dictate of the alphabet Shakespeare, Sheridan and Shaw stand side by side on the library shelf, and by the dictate of the public their plays command the English repertory. Of other playwrights who shaped the course of English drama the playgoer sees and learns little. These forgotten men and the times in which they lived and worked are part of the pattern of the English theatre. To ignore them is to neglect the whole pattern as well as its parts. (1)*

Stanley Houghton is one of these forgotten playwrights who made an important contribution to English drama. Since his death at the age of only thirty-two, in 1913, his name has gradually faded from memory although his most famous play, Hindle Wakes (1912), remains familiar. No detailed biography of him exists: indeed, the absence of such a work is curious since he achieved a national, and in due course, an American fame and his reputation remained high for several years after his death. Ironically, the 1914 edition of Who's Who was released to the press at the time of his death on 11 December 1913: in it was Houghton's first ever entry. Virtually all the national papers carried his death with The Manchester Guardian (now The Guardian) in particular giving it wide coverage since he had been a part-time member of its staff. His native City, Manchester, was so proud of him that it erected a memorial tablet in his honour (see Ch.13). Its unveiling in February 1915 was performed by Miss A.E.F. Horniman whose Gaiety Theatre (Manchester) was an influential enterprise in the

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1. The Victorian Theatre : a survey, OUP, 1956, p.150.



development of repertory theatre in this country. Houghton wrote many of his plays for her. At approximately the same time a memorial scholarship, originally intended to be offered to Manchester University, was instituted at The Manchester Grammar School where Houghton had been a pupil.

Many brief accounts of his life did appear after his death and he still features in most standard reference books connected with drama and the theatre. However, these accounts give very little indication of either Houghton or his works. Several contain erroneous facts which are also perpetuated in later editions. For example, A Dictionary of Literature in the English Language<sup>(2)</sup> and Everyman's Dictionary of Literary Biography : English and American<sup>(3)</sup> both record that he died in Paris when in fact he died and was cremated in Manchester. The Encyclopaedia of World Theatre<sup>(4)</sup>, considering Hindle Wakes, says that Fanny became pregnant as a result of her affair with Alan: this is not only wrong but completely undermines the very strength of Fanny's refusal to marry Alan which in turn detracts from the play's greatest contemporary shock. Even the Dictionary of National Biography<sup>(5)</sup> has incorrect dates of the writing and first production of some of his works. The only biography of any note is that by the playwright Harold Brighouse who in 1914 wrote the introduction to a three volume edition of The Works of Stanley Houghton (Constable, 1914). However, these volumes, whilst valuable, are incomplete: they do not contain

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2. R. Myers (Ed), Vol.I, Pergamon, 1970, p.426.

3. J.W. Cousin and D.C. Browning (Eds), Pan, 1972, p.338.

4. Introduction by Martin Esslin, Thomas and Hudson, 1977, p.143.

5. H.W.C. Davis and J.R.H. Weaver (Eds), OUP, 1927, pp.271-273.

a lot of Houghton's works and they only provide a general, and at times vague, account of his life. James Agate, that influential and renowned critic, was quick to note the anomaly:

*Where we chiefly fault Mr. Brighthouse's introduction is that it gives little clue to the personality of the man, to that diffidence and charm, that obvious pre-occupation with the best-intentioned in life and art which conquered all of those critics who knew him intimately .... In this introduction Houghton is only a name and there is no indication as to the manner of man he was. (6)*

Robin Littlewood, founder of the Critics' Circle, and for fifty years one of Fleet Street's respected critics<sup>(7)</sup> added that

*perhaps it is inevitable that the biography itself, evidently official, and full of considered eulogy and permitted detail, does not re-create for us with absolute truth to nature the image of the charming, bright, unaffected young fellow .... He scouts ... the really interesting fact[s]. (8)*

Other articles on Houghton's works, in the absence of any sustained biographical considerations, likewise remain incomplete. Batho and Dobrée, in the 1930's, looking back over the period 1830-1914 found that those studies of writers' works which excluded or ignored their daily lives were "arid": *"the literature of the past is only of value in so far as it has significance .... by finding out not only what people did, but why they did it, what circumstances, thoughts and emotions brought them to act". (9)* As most of the articles on Houghton

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6. The Manchester Playgoer, Vol.2, No.1, July 1914, p.26.
  7. See E. Sprigge, Sybil Thorndike Casson, Gollancz, 1971, p.87.
  8. Daily Chronicle, July 1914: Article entitled 'The plays and prose of Stanley Houghton' in Manchester Central Reference Library (Local History: ref.920).
  9. The Victorians and After 1830-1914, The Cressett Press, 1962 (3rd edn.), p.ix. (First pub. 1938).

were written during the period they considered, I believe that this particular opinion of Batho and Dobrée is of value: it makes a thesis of this nature all the more necessary. Modern scholarship has refined such a consideration with sociologists of literature, for example, equating literature in society with society in literature. Such a view is by no means universally accepted, however, and whilst much work in this field is Marxist in ideology and whilst not necessarily accepting their philosophy, I do consider that like Batho and Dobrée's their basic tenets are useful in that they present other viewpoints which can offer useful insights for a study of the type planned for this thesis. Thus the belief that literature is a constituent part of something larger than itself, the culture or the society in which it has been written, is particularly apposite for drama. Gurvitch,<sup>(10)</sup> for example, sees an analogy between life as "*social ceremonies*" and the theatre as a "*sublimation*" of certain social situations, whether it idealizes, parodies or condemns them: "*the theatre is society ... looking at itself in various mirrors, the images reflected therein making the people concerned (spectators) ... come to some decisions*". (p.76). Such a consideration would therefore involve the audience, performances, actors, content, style, interpretations and the social function of the theatre. Duvignaud<sup>(11)</sup> acknowledges such an approach but gives particular emphasis to the dramatists' purposes and the producers' styles. Empiricists, such as Escarpit,<sup>(12)</sup> regard

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10. 'The Sociology of the Theatre', Ch.3 of E. and T. Burns (Eds), Sociology of Literature and Drama, Penguin, 1973.
  11. 'The Theatre in Society - Society in the Theatre'. Ch.4 of Sociology of Literature and Drama, *ibid.*
  12. Sociologie de La Littérature, PUF, 1958 and as ed. Le Littéraire et Le Social, Flammarion, 1970.

literature as a commodity and as such require a consideration of the writer and his place in society: his income, status and standard of living along with his relationship with his public, publishers and printers. Akin to this are the reactions of critics and readers as time passes and as the work ages. It may be recalled that Q.D. Leavis practised a similar method in the past by examining the reading public for fiction.<sup>(13)</sup> David Daiches's<sup>(14)</sup> approach is equally interesting when applied to drama. This involves the application of whatever one knows and understands of a society to one's study of its literature: a form of literary criticism. It is a literary method used for literary purposes: one's view of the text is deepened by placing it in its social context. The information acquired from external sources may cast light on aspects of the work. This is particularly true, argues Daiches, when there is a decay of traditional values, a change in attitudes and conventions whether passive or active. Such changes require new techniques - a point of relevance to this thesis.

In summary so far it would seem that a link exists between a writer and his works: his environment. Houghton's plays and prose works are part of a broader social reality sometimes called the cultural field.<sup>(15)</sup> This theory holds that there is a complex web of inter-relationships between literature of all types and its background. The plots, emotions, themes, descriptions, structures, techniques, style, diction and all other elements that go to make a literary work

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13. Fiction and the Reading Public, Chatto and Windus, 1932.

14. The Novel and the Modern World, CUP, 1960 (2nd edn.).

15. For a detailed discussion of this term see Frederick Jameson, Marxism and Form, Princeton UP, 1971, p.5.

are chosen because they are meaningful to the writer in the light of the world in which he finds himself at a given time. Such a belief helps to explain the similarities to be found in varying degrees in the different plays by different authors in any one period, a point also of interest to this thesis: during the period with which this thesis is concerned one finds a succession of plays dealing with the topical:

*Shaw and Galsworthy were the leaders; Granville-Barker made rather profounder contributions which were a little too subtle for the public; Harkin skirmished over ground a little removed from the great mass of playgoers; St. John Ervine removed the setting to Northern Ireland .... There were many lesser playwrights ... Elizabeth Baker with Chains; Stanley Houghton with Hindle Wakes; Githa Sowerby with Rutherford and Son; Allan Monkhouse with Mary Broome: all these and others tended to a new liberation and a fresh illumination, and it seemed for the moment as though drama would oust the novel from its place as the chief literary vehicle of the period. (16)*

This thesis will therefore concern itself with all the points touched upon so far in the belief that such an approach will offer the widest yet most consistent insight into the life and literary career of Houghton. However, it will not just be a chronological progression with a history of each play. At times it will be necessary to look at some of his works critically in order to balance some unfounded criticisms, or correct any erroneous facts and illogical conclusions that exist about Houghton or his works. This is particularly true of Hindle Wakes, for example, a play the history of which is long and interesting and whose influence stretched far beyond Houghton into dramatic and cinematic history. Many wrong conclusions have been drawn about it including the belief that it was censored by the Lord Chamberlain.

One piece of published research on the plays of Houghton does exist: Marcel Gaberthuel, William Stanley Houghton 1881-1913: Eine Untersuchung Seiner Dramen, 1973 (Ph.D. thesis).<sup>(17)</sup> This research, whilst valuable, is incomplete. During a lengthy stay in this country (1965-1967) Dr. Gaberthuel searched unsuccessfully for Houghton's papers. Except for some letters of Houghton's known to be in the John Rylands University of Manchester Library (Deansgate) and despite an appeal in the local press and the Times Literary Supplement (3 Feb. 1967) he concluded that *"it may now be said with certainty that apart from the standard edition of Brighouse and the remaining plays with the Lord Chamberlain<sup>(18)</sup> there [are] no more to be found"*.<sup>(19)</sup> Consequently his study not only relied on those plays in The Works and with those in the Lord Chamberlain's Collection (see below) but his biography (some 400 words) was based entirely on that given by Brighouse in The Works.<sup>(20)</sup>

My interest in Houghton was aroused accidentally. On a visit to the fourth floor of the Manchester Central Reference Library I noticed the memorial tablet already referred to in its now rather humble position.

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17. Buchdruckerei Gassman Ag, Solothurn. Submitted to the University of Freiburg, Switzerland.
  18. Some of the plays excluded by Brighouse from The Works are located in the Lord Chamberlain's Plays (now in the British Library).
  19. p.v.: *"Düruber hinaus aber darf jetzt mit Sicherheit gesagt werden, dass sich ausser der Standardausgabe von Brighouse und den bei Lord Chamberlain hinterlegten stücken nichts mehr finden lässt"*.
  20. p.9: *"Die ausführlichste Biographie gibt Brighouse in der Introduction zu Houghtons Werken, auf der unsere Zusammenfassung im wesentlichen beruht"*.

Attempts to find out more led first to the reference books and then to The Works. Next was located Dr. Gaberthuel's thesis in the British Library. For all the reasons given these proved to be unsatisfactory. The next step was to trace the whereabouts of Houghton's family, a task all the more difficult since Houghton never married and there were no direct descendants. To pursue his only sister by her married name of Caw seemed equally difficult until a chance check in the Manchester telephone directory led to finding Mrs. Dorothy Caw, the widow of Houghton's nephew. In late 1981 Mrs. Caw kindly invited me to her home in Cheshire and allowed me access to what at the time she thought were all the papers of Houghton that she possessed. It was to be almost a further two years before an even greater find was to be made in the possession of Mrs. Caw. The delay was the result of the collection not being kept together nor its contents having been recorded in any systematic way. The papers, until 1983, were wrapped in brown paper, and kept in various suitcases in the house and the garage. The entire collection is now in the library of the University of Salford. (See Appendix 2).

My research into Houghton's life had, even up to those discoveries, been a fascinating venture. Despite a gap of some seventy years since his death, there are still people alive who knew him and many more who have memories of those connected with him. Their contributions to this research are all the more valuable because many of those in old age will soon die. There are also various collections of letters which with their owners' deaths are now becoming available to scholars although some remain in private hands. For example, the John Rylands University of Manchester Library (Deansgate Building) possesses the Allan Monkhouse Collection which contains much material

relevant to Houghton. The Library also contains Miss Horniman's 17 volume collection of press-cuttings in which Houghton features prominently. At Eccles Public Library is to be found the Harold Brighthouse Collection. What makes this valuable is the fact that Brighthouse (best known as the author of Hobson's Choice) and Houghton were not only at school together but were the closest of friends. As already mentioned it was Brighthouse who wrote the biographical introduction to The Works. The Brighthouse Collection has much that is relevant to Houghton, including the bound typescript of a collaborative work, The Hillarys, which whilst acted professionally, was never published. The same collection also reveals an example of how close the two playwrights were and at the same time acts as a reminder of an interesting yet forgotten fact : the well-known saying 'Hobson's Choice' was to be the title for a play not by Brighthouse but by Houghton (see p.88 ), but Houghton died before he could make use of it and Brighthouse whilst preparing his introduction for The Works, rediscovered it and used it himself a year later in 1915.

Of those people connected with Houghton whom I met or corresponded with, two are particularly worthy of mention. The first of these is the actress and author Dodie Smith (b.1896) who in several letters recollected acting with Houghton and said that he was so good as an amateur that he could have gone professional. The second is Lady Wolfitt, the widow of Sir Donald, who invited me to her Hampshire home where we discussed her father Ben Iden Payne who not only attended school with Houghton and Brighthouse but also established the Gaiety Company with Miss Horniman in Manchester. His later emigration to America enabled him to develop repertory theatre there. In England he directed some of Houghton's plays for the first time and later



introduced some of them in America.

What I had discovered through these contacts, the printed material, and my early meetings with Mrs. Caw, was certainly of value. However, I felt it fell short. Were there any more papers of Houghton's to be found despite Dr. Gaberthuel's conclusion to the contrary? After all, his life had been so full that Brighouse had said of him: *"he may indeed be said to have invented a candle combustible at once in four places"*.<sup>(21)</sup> Why Brighouse should then only proceed to touch the periphery of that life in his introduction to The Works was both annoying and intriguing. Surely more material must have survived from a man so prolific as Houghton. Whilst remaining in full-time employment until mid-1912 he acted as a part-time theatre critic and book reviewer for The Manchester Guardian (the latter post being carefully vetted by C.P. Scott for all holders) on nearly 200 occasions between 1907-12. As well as that he also contributed many miscellaneous articles ranging from political satires to short stories and sketches. He wrote at least 25 plays between 1900-13 and by the time of his death had embarked on a new path in writing the first six chapters of a novel.

In my early discussions with Mrs. Caw in 1981 she, fortunately, persuaded of my legitimate interest in Houghton, released to me an unexpectedly rich source : a large collection of photographs of the original commercial production of Hindle Wakes in a presentation album and other photographs of the 1912 London production of The Younger Generation, the latter taken by The Daily Mirror. There was also a

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21. Introduction, p.xi.

collection of contracts for plays and performances which were full of invaluable facts, figures, dates and names. They enabled me to complete in fuller detail an already growing jigsaw. They also helped me to establish categorically previously unknown or unsubstantiated facts : a closer insight into Houghton's life had been made possible. Yet there still remained a gap : the periods 1881-1900 and 1908-1913 were fairly well documented but little existed for the period 1900-1907. Then in April of last year came a telephone call from Mrs. Caw which took me back to her home and to new materials covering mainly the very period 1900-1907. Not only had I now before me material that no other researcher had seen or made use of but also examples of Houghton's earliest works including what must be his first ever three-act play, written out in two exercise books. There were also works which were totally unknown previously and others which were believed to have perished or disappeared. For example, there was a bound typescript of his first amateur collaboration, a drama presented at the Manchester Athenaeum in 1906 in which he also appeared. This was only known previously from the licensing copy lodged with the Lord Chamberlain. Another play bears the sticker of a then well-known London commercial agency and may well represent Houghton's earliest attempt to go commercial but not under his own name. He omitted his surname and gave the authorship as 'William Stanley'. There is also a copy of his well-known play of the time Pearls (1912) whose cover now reveals for the first time its original title: The Minion of the Law. The find also produced the first eighteen pages of his last play written in Paris shortly before the long confinement to bed that preceded his death.

What can only be regarded as unique amongst the collection is the complete manuscript of Ginger, a four-act play, which contains the only known example of Houghton's working method; here, for the first time, is evidence of that meticulous planning alluded to by Brighthouse. Interestingly, part of the outline is written on the back of a letter from Ben Iden Payne of 1910. Brighthouse did not see fit to include the play in The Works despite a professional run. Evidence is also provided of Houghton's experimenting with a name for his main character. The one he eventually decided upon turned out to be that of a real live baronet and an objection to it is to be found in the review letter of the Lord Chamberlain's ~~Examiner~~ of Plays.

Another typescript of a play also excluded from The Works, again despite a professional run, is important because it shows several alterations made by Houghton. Such alterations are rare occurrences in Houghton's manuscripts and taken with the fact that this play, Trust the People, was written after Hindle Wakes may suggest the problems his failing health was now giving him. There is also in the collection the only known copy of a short story in typed manuscript by Houghton which appears to have been intended for publication or printing. It marks an early stage in his prose writings and when studied in connection with those he submitted to The Manchester Guardian and then compared with his first incomplete novel, one sees a picture of his development.

This collection then consists of what may well be the only remaining papers of Stanley Houghton previously unknown. Their availability to scholars now means that he can, for the first time since his death, be considered properly in his place in the development of British

drama. For my own particular purpose the collection has enabled me to fill gaps and challenge previously accepted and erroneous facts about his life and his works.

Finally, a point about the Lord Chamberlain's Plays needs to be made. In connection with several of Houghton's plays it has been possible, for the first time, to quote from the official Examiner of Plays' review on which the Lord Chamberlain<sup>(22)</sup> based his decision whether to grant a play a licence or not. Such a facility is fortuitous because normally the reviews are unavailable to the public. Originally the Lord Chamberlain's Plays were kept at St. James's Palace. Recently they were released to the British Library and by accident so were some of the reviews. This mistake only came to light (apparently for the first time) when during my research I located some of the reviews. The British Library were unaware that they had any of them and the Lord Chamberlain's Office, only on subsequent investigation, became aware that some had left their premises. My request to see others on the basis that I had seen some was refused. Despite several months of consideration the Office finally decided (1982) not to release any more because such reports were never intended for public view in the first place. Those that are available are referred to in the appropriate places throughout the thesis.

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22. During Houghton's period the office of Lord Chamberlain was held by: Viscount Althorp (1905-12) and Lord Sandhurst (1912-21).

What I intend to do in this thesis is to bring together for the first time a study of all the known works of Stanley Houghton and at the same time to discuss his life and the conditions and influences which prevailed upon him and thereby led to the type of work he produced both in prose and drama. This will necessarily involve a consideration of other notable figures who were involved in his life. With such information it will then be possible not only to put Houghton within his rightful place in the development of British drama, but also to specify the particular skills and influence which warrant his being so placed. Ultimately the thesis will be a contribution to that statement which opened this introduction: it will help to perpetuate the name of Stanley Houghton.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### EARLY LIFE

William Stanley Houghton was born on Tuesday 22 February 1881 at 1 Amy Villas, Doveston Road, Ashton-upon-Mersey, Altrincham, in the County of Chester, the only son of John Hartley Houghton and Lucy Mary Houghton (née Darbyshire).<sup>(1)</sup> His only sister, Ellen Muriel Houghton, was born on 19 April 1884.<sup>(2)</sup> The family had an interesting pedigree which can be traced back at least as far as 1702 via the Preston Guild Rolls, the name Houghton being most prominent. It should be added that until the 18th Century the name was spelt 'Hoghton' but between the Guilds of 1702 and 1722 (bearing in mind that the Guild is only held once every twenty years) the 'u' crept in.<sup>(3)</sup> It is pronounced 'Hawton'. Such a change in spelling was in fact picked up by Houghton's mother and in the 1920's<sup>(4)</sup> encouraged her to approach the De Hoghton household of Hoghton Tower near Preston in Lancashire to establish any connections with this ancient family (from 1203) who rank second in point of precedence in the Baronetage.<sup>(5)</sup> Unfortunately there are no records of any such visit nor of any link.<sup>(6)</sup> The attempt was not as presumptuous as it might seem, however, since the De Hoghton family resided in the area of the playwright's ancestry, holding various offices from coroner to MP and also marrying within the vicinity.

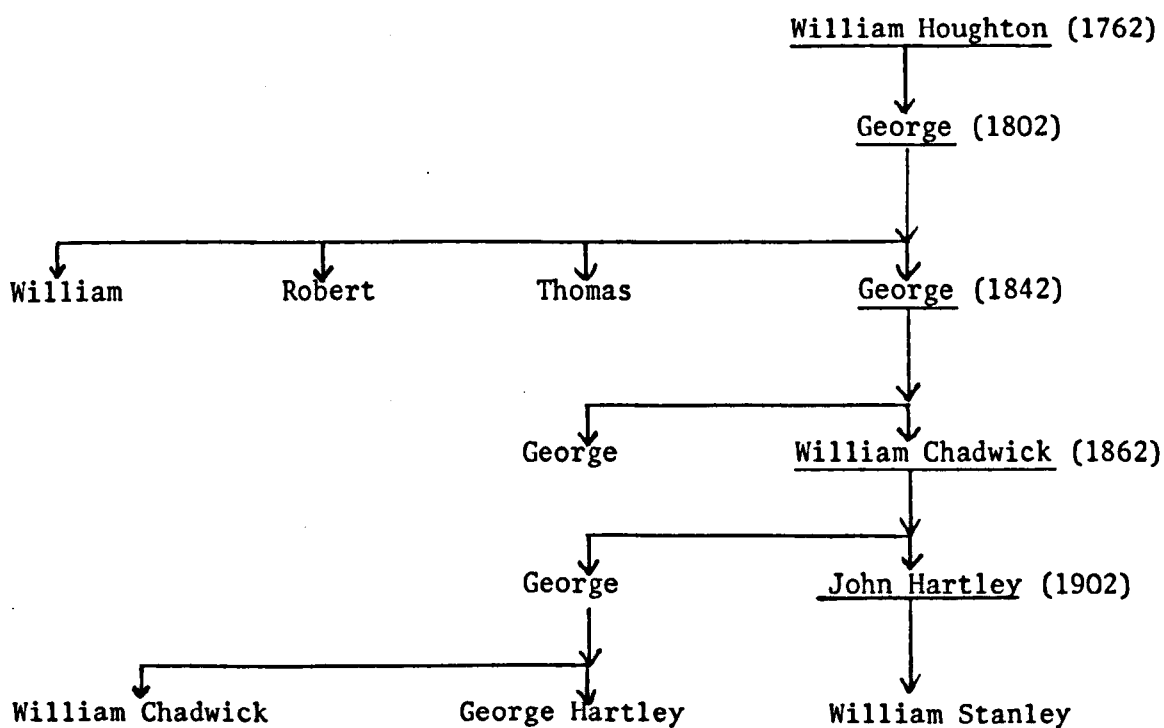
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1. Certified copy of an entry of birth, Trafford Registration District. Entry No. 118, 25 March 1881.
  2. ditto, No. 60/41 Altrincham.
  3. Introduction, p.ix. (see Abbreviations).
  4. As related personally by the widow of Houghton's nephew, Mrs. Dorothy Caw of Sale, Cheshire.
  5. Burke's Peerage and Baronetage, Redwood Burn Ltd, 1975, pp.750-51.
  6. Information in a letter from the present Baronet, Sir Bernard De Hoghton, 28 Feb 1982.

Being on the Guild Rolls was an honour but it was not exceptional:

*At the period immediately previous to the passing of the Municipal Corporation Act [1835], Preston contained about three hundred resident and three thousand non-resident freemen .... These were respectively termed in-burgesses and foreign burgesses. Those who were enrolled at a guild merchant were styled guild burgesses; those entered on other occasions were called burgesses by court roll. Freedom was obtained by grant of the Corporation and by birth, but it is the general opinion that in the earlier period of the municipal government of the town "almost every respectable housekeeper was a burgess". (7)*

The Houghton family were "Foreign Burgesses" and in trading terms it was a valuable asset. At each Guild Merchant the Burgesses could enrol their sons of whatever age as well as renew their own freedom. Those still living in the town were "in-burgesses" whilst those entitled to renew their freedom but no longer living there were "out" or "foreign burgesses".

From the Rolls it is possible to establish a type of family tree thus:




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7. Charles Hardwick, History of the Borough of Preston and its Environs in the County of Lancaster, Preston, 1857, p. 302.

and to follow general movements:

William Houghton lived at Inskip near Preston in at least 1762 moving approximately two miles to Catforth in 1782. George, his son, was registered in 1802 from Lea, some two and a half miles from Catforth, and in 1822 half a mile further south at Clifton. He was designated a husbandman. His eldest son George was registered from Manchester in 1842. In 1862 his eldest son William Chadwick was registered of Manchester, a book-keeper. By 1882 he had moved to Ashton-upon-Mersey and was recorded as deceased in the 1902 Guild. He in turn had two sons, one of whom was the playwright's father, John Hartley (1856-1923), listed in 1902 as a cotton cloth merchant of Manchester. The playwright's uncle George, also of Ashton-upon-Mersey, was listed as an insurance clerk in 1902 and as deceased in 1922. His two sons were both enrolled and George Hartley was listed as a knitted goods manufacturer. It is interesting to note the popularity of the Christian names William and George. The playwright, apart from on one occasion (see p.41) never used the name William (that of his grandfather and great, great, great grandfather and cousin) but always signed himself Stanley Houghton or by the initials S.H. Of his grandparents Stanley was able to recollect that they were strict Nonconformists *"who probably were never inside a playhouse in their lives"*.<sup>(8)</sup>

Stanley's parents were both born in 1856.<sup>(9)</sup> His mother Lucy Mary Darbyshire (1856-1930) was the youngest of four children born to Samuel Darbyshire (c. 1822-1871) of Worsley, a joiner, storekeeper, book-keeper

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8. An interview with the Glasgow Evening Times, 20 Dec 1912, p.4.

9. The 1881 Census (ref. RG11/3504) lists them both as being 25 years of age.



and cashier, and Mary Kent (c.1822-1864).<sup>(10)</sup> They were married at the Parish Church in Eccles, Lancashire in 1844. Samuel's parents were Oliver Darbyshire (c.1797-?), a boatbuilder and carpenter, and Ellen Bowker (c.1800-?). They too were married in the above Church in 1820. Both of their fathers had been weavers from Worsley. Likewise, Mary Kent's father, Charles (c.1795-?), had also been a weaver from Worsley.

Lucy's sister, Emily Darbyshire (1852-1913) married James Pullein Thompson (1852-1924), a clergyman from Yorkshire,<sup>(11)</sup> at the Parish Church in Stretford in 1876. At that time he was a deacon but was ordained later in 1878.<sup>(12)</sup> At one time he ran a charitable organisation for the blind with Sir W. S. Gilbert (1836-1911) but the venture ended acrimoniously with Gilbert writing a long condemnation of Thompson.<sup>(13)</sup> On 27 April 1881 the Rev. Pullein Thompson travelled to St Martin's Church in Sale as a guest where he baptised Stanley Houghton.<sup>(14)</sup> His own family consisted of five children, the eldest of whom was Emily Muriel Pullein Thompson (1884-1954).<sup>(15)</sup> She was in fact born within a few weeks of Houghton's only sister, Ellen Muriel. Whether or not this accounted for the close relationship that existed at least between Stanley and Emily Muriel is

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10. I am indebted to a relative of Houghton's mother, Professor John Linton Gardner, CBE, Composer (b.1917), of New Malden, Surrey. (For further details see Who's Who, Adam and Charles Black, 1982, p.805). He kindly supplied me with part of his family tree (incomplete) and copies of various birth, death and baptismal certificates.
  11. An extensive record of this family is to be found in Catharine Pullein, The Pulleyns of Yorkshire, Whitehead, 1915.
  12. Crockford's Clerical Directory, The Field Press, 1920, p.1496.
  13. See My Case against the Rev. J Pullein Thompson, Vicar of Christ Church, Chelsea, and Hon. Secretary to the National Blind Relief Society, privately printed, or Hesketh Pearson, Gilbert : his Life and Strife, Methuen, 1957, p.218.
  14. Name recorded in the baptismal records of that Church and supplied by the present incumbent, St Martin's Rectory, 367 Glebelands Road, Sale.
  15. The mother of Professor Gardner.

unclear but *"she was exceedingly friendly with him"*.<sup>(16)</sup> Stanley was only three years older. Indeed, Emily Muriel may well have been the influence behind the character Maggie, the heroine of his unfinished novel (see Ch.11). Sadly Houghton died on the very day of her wedding. Her brother, Capt. H. J. Pullein Thompson, M.C. (1885-1957) recalled that when *"her favourite cousin"* died he *"had to ask the Chelsea shops to remove their posters so that she wouldn't see them on the way to the Church"*.<sup>(17)</sup> The posters were those to be found outside newsagents. Stanley at that time was a celebrated playwright, known in several countries. He had already sent a wedding gift in advance: *"a music cabinet, which alas, I do not have now"*.<sup>(18)</sup> The wedding was conducted at her father's own Church in Chelsea.<sup>(19)</sup> Within three days the Rev. Pullein Thompson was up in Manchester conducting Stanley's funeral.<sup>(20)</sup>

It has proved almost impossible to establish any family movement until 1881 when Stanley's parents were both twenty-five years of age and he was born. It is more than likely that the house still standing is the one designated on his birth certificate. In October 1869 the occupier is given as Charles Higham and the property was sold in 1895 to John Hesketh.<sup>(21)</sup> However, it is somewhat puzzling to note also that the house was originally known as 4 Doveston Road and was subsequently renumbered 2

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16. Confirmed by Prof. Gardner. However, see Ch.4, p.142.

17. Copy of a letter sent to Prof. Gardner from his uncle, Capt. Pullein Thompson, in 1954.

18. Prof. Gardner, 26 Sept. 1982.

19. Christ's Church, Chelsea. He was vicar from 1894-1914. See Crockford's, op.cit.

20. The Era, 17 Dec 1913, H.C. Vol.M. (See Abbreviations).

21. Title deeds held and information supplied by the Halifax Building Society, W. Yorkshire.

yet the 1871 census merely lists it as Amy Villas occupied by Joseph Jones, merchant, with two children and one domestic servant.<sup>(22)</sup>

The 1881 Census omits the house name and number altogether. When the Houghtons lived there it was probably one house, but now it is divided into two separate dwellings. In 1981 No. 2 was on the market for nearly £23,000:<sup>(23)</sup> by doubling that figure one gets the impression that the whole property was once an above average dwelling. Like the previous occupants the Houghtons also had a domestic servant, Anne Watson, a fifteen year old girl from Ashley, Cheshire, who lived in.<sup>(24)</sup> The area was residential: other residents were listed as a solicitor's chartered clerk; a joiner/builder; a salesman; a cabinet-maker; a provisions dealer; a grey cloth agent; a chemical manufacturer; a merchant; and a commercial traveller.<sup>(25)</sup>

The Houghtons, however, never bought any of their houses, choosing to rent, and moved frequently, though never any great distance. It would seem that as a grey cloth agent<sup>(26)</sup> his father had to keep close to the Cotton Exchange in Manchester where he (and later the playwright) was a registered member.<sup>(27)</sup> He worked for the firm George Battersby and Co., Grey Cloth Agents, which appears to have been a family business then in the possession of Thomas Henry Battersby. The business was originally

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22. 1871 Census (schedule 207, Ashton-on-Mersey).

23. Taken from sales literature of D. Silverman & Co., Sale, Cheshire.

24. 1881 Census (April).

25. *ibid.*

26. As given on Houghton's birth cert. Col.6, *op.cit.* and 1881 census, *op.cit.*

27. Slater's Directory of Manchester and Salford, 1909, p.1953.

located at No. 7 Meal Street, Manchester,<sup>(28)</sup> but when demolished moved to 16 Queen Street, off Deansgate.<sup>(29)</sup> Stanley too worked at both addresses until mid 1912. His father seems to have eventually become a partner in the small firm since the playwright's executors, his father and employer, were both listed equally as "merchants"<sup>(30)</sup> and in his father's own will (made in 1914) one finds the words "my partner Thomas Henry Battersby".<sup>(31)</sup>

Grey Cloth was a comprehensive term that included unbleached cotton cloth generally: *"Yellow would ... have been the more nearly correct description. A very large proportion of the Lancashire export trade [was] in grey goods and a smaller yet considerable proportion of the home trade."*<sup>(32)</sup> In 1903 for example, 1,880,321 yards x 1,000 of grey cloth were exported (1904: 2,033,895).<sup>(33)</sup> Cotton was the trade of Manchester and followed a highly structured chain. From the port of entry it was purchased by a broker who in turn sold it to the spinner as raw material. He then sold his product to the yarn agent who then passed it on to the weaver. The latter then sold his cloth to the cloth merchant who then had it 'finished' by different firms depending on the finish required, e.g. bleached, dyed. The merchant shipped the

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28. Slater's Directory, op.cit.

29. Letter to A.N.Monkhouse, 20 May 1912, ANM 10. (See Abbreviations). See fn.32.

30. Calendar of the Grants of Probate and Letters of Administration made in the Probate Registries of The High Court of Justice in England, 1914, H-K, p.173. For location see Ch.13, fn.19.

31. Last Will and Testament in The Family Division of the High Court of Justice, London. See also Calendar of the Grants, 1923, p.220.

32. The Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th Edn., Vol.VII, Cambridge U.P., 1910, p.277. The article was written by Houghton's friend and colleague A.N.Monkhouse who is discussed in detail in Ch.4.

33. ibid. p.279.

cloth abroad and financed it until it was sold to a foreign dealer. The business required a thorough knowledge of the foreign markets for cloth "and of foreign customers to whom credit may safely be allowed : .... The amount of capital employed by the different merchants varies ... some own and control mills in Bombay or Shanghai ... others hire a room or an office and share a telephone with other offices on the same floor."<sup>(34)</sup> This then puts Mr. Houghton's job in perspective. Most of the bartering was carried out at the Manchester Royal Exchange, a place that Stanley Houghton was to find invaluable in later years (see p.238). Practically all the spinners and manufacturers and all the export merchants "of any importance" were subscribers. The subscription in 1906 was raised from three guineas (£94 in 1981) to four guineas (£126) and the number of members totalled some 8,786.<sup>(35)</sup> By the 1920's the figures were impressive in terms of the power of the Royal Exchange. It had some 11,000 members and controlled some 60 million spindles, three-quarters of a million looms, approximately 500 brokers, 1,800 yarn agents, 120 yarn dyers, 300 waste dealers, 1,800 cloth dealers, 200 bleachers, 120 calico printers, 250 dyers, 150 finishers and over 1,000 shippers.<sup>(36)</sup> Indeed, prior to 1914 one quarter<sup>(37)</sup> of the total exports from Great Britain were cotton goods: "Manchester without its merchants [was] unthinkable."<sup>(38)</sup>

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34. See W.H. Brindley (Ed), The Soul of Manchester, Manchester U.P., 1929, p.202 and p.213.

35. The Encyclopaedia Britannica, op.cit. pp.280-1.

36. The Soul of Manchester, op.cit. p.203.

37. *ibid.* p.204.

38. *ibid.* p.213.

By 1884 the family had moved to Springfield Road, Sale, where Houghton's sister Ellen Muriel was born.<sup>(39)</sup> How long they remained there is difficult to ascertain, but some indication can be gained if one considers that the playwright attended schools in Bowdon, Stockport and Wilmslow prior to his arrival at The Manchester Grammar School in 1896.<sup>(40)</sup> Such moves also highlight an improvement in the family's living standards since the suburbs of Manchester had, since the middle of the 19th Century, been inhabited by the prosperous merchants: "[the merchant] first colonised such districts as Ardwick, Broughton ... Alderley, Wilmslow, Sale and Bowdon."<sup>(41)</sup>

In 1896<sup>(42)</sup> the Houghtons moved to 2 Athol Road, Alexandra Park, Manchester, some two miles from the City centre. Here they remained until shortly after the playwright's death in 1913. As usual they appear to have rented the property.<sup>(43)</sup> The house still stands but has been converted into several flats. It is at the right hand end of a block of four, each three storeys high and may well have been new at the time of the Houghton occupation. The area was residential: at No. 14 lived an estate agent; No. 24 a surgical instrument maker; No. 26 a stock broker; and at No. 79 an architect.<sup>(44)</sup> It was not a thoroughfare. From there Houghton immediately enrolled as a fee paying pupil at The Manchester Grammar School.<sup>(45)</sup> Although little of his education prior to 1896 can be established, apart from him being

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39. See fn. 2.

40. Introduction, p.ix.

41. F.A. Bruton, A Short History of Manchester and Salford, Sherratt and Hughes, 1924, p.252.

42. Introduction, pp.ix-x.

43. The deeds held by Mr. C. Hug of Manchester show the owners from 1897-1920 as John and Annie Pendleton.

44. Kelly's Directory of Manchester, 1912, p.37.

45. Manchester Grammar School: a biographical register of Old Mancunians 1888-1951, Rawson, 1965. p.125.

"a great prizewinner",<sup>(46)</sup> two pieces of information will at least provide a framework. His first school was Bowdon College,<sup>(47)</sup> opened in about 1870 by a Professor Hall on South Downs Road as a fee paying institution. That area was certainly residential. By 1936 the school had closed.<sup>(48)</sup> However, it is from Wilmslow College, Cheshire, that positive information has been found. The day after Houghton's obituary in The Manchester Guardian (11 Dec.1913) a letter appeared from a C.P. Clarke (presumably the Headmaster) to the editor. The writer was indignant that no mention had been made of the College in connection with Houghton. It would appear that he was approximately eleven years of age on entry and was

*at Wilmslow College during the greater part of the two years prior to his removal to Manchester. He was an able scholar, and when he gained honours in the Cambridge Local Examination, the examiners did themselves credit by giving him the mark of distinction in English.*

*Even in those early days he was a scribbler. He wrote a diverting story after the manner of 'Treasure Island' and during an enforced absence from school - he was a delicate boy - he used to run, for the edification of the household, a daily paper, in which the visits of the butcher, baker and greengrocer were recorded and daily commented on.*<sup>(49)</sup>

Health had always been a problem for Houghton. As a child he suffered frequent bouts of illness with long spells away from school although "no specific ailment manifested itself apart from an attack of chorea ... [and] recurring periods of a kind of influenza accompanied by a high temperature and followed by prostration".<sup>(50)</sup>

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46. Introduction, p.x.

47. *ibid.* p.ix.

48. Facts supplied by Miss M. Kendric, a local historian of Bowdon.

49. The Manchester Guardian, 12 Dec. 1913, p.11.

50. Introduction, p.ix.

Manchester Grammar School (MGS) was to offer more than just an education to Houghton, an education which Brighthouse tells us would have culminated at University had he not been "*placed upon the Modern side*".<sup>(51)</sup> The school's history and standing is well documented and it would be appropriate here to note some of the remarks made by the High Master who took up office shortly after Houghton's attendance at the school:

*The pupils find their way into every branch of activity ... it is a local school in that boys are drawn from Manchester and the accessible vicinity ... an organism which acts and reacts upon its environment ... a great experiment in the democratization of higher learning. It has ignored all barriers of caste or birth or wealth. It has offered free education and generous financial assistance to boys of all classes who have shown they had the capacity to raise themselves in the scale of being .... In accordance with this policy it was the first of the large endowed Grammar schools to come under the new system shaped by ... the Balfour Act. There are all the time some four hundred boys drawn from these schools [i.e. elementary] who have free places at the Grammar School; many have maintenance bursaries in addition to free education ... [and to] Oxford and Cambridge ... she sends some fifteen entrance scholars ... every year.* (52)

Such an heterogeneous mixture must have influenced Houghton in his later writing days.

There were some contemporary names on the MGS register which were to play important roles in Houghton's later life and indeed may have been instrumental in some way in convincing him of his true goal in life. One such person was Gilbert Cannan (MGS Scholarship 1896-1902) who

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51. Introduction, p.x.

52. The Soul of Manchester op.cit. p.86. An article by J.L.Paton, High Master 1903-1924. The pattern was much the same in 1982 with 56 Oxbridge candidates, 30 being scholarships or exhibitions. See Daily Mail 29 Jan.1982, p.15.



became the dramatic critic of the Star (1909-10)<sup>(53)</sup> and later a novelist and dramatist and good friend of Galsworthy.<sup>(54)</sup> He was even caricatured by Shaw.<sup>(55)</sup> His play Miles Dixon (1910) played at the Gaiety Theatre, Manchester, with Houghton's The Younger Generation (21 Nov. 1910).<sup>(56)</sup> Indeed, shortly after Hindle Wakes (1911) was published Houghton sent Cannan a signed copy of the play and confided in him that *"he was renouncing the cotton trade in favour of authorship"*. Cannan's view was that he thought Houghton would *"probably be very successful"*.<sup>(57)</sup> There was also James E. Agate (MGS 1893-95)<sup>(58)</sup> the renowned dramatic critic (*"the Hazlitt of the twentieth century"*)<sup>(59)</sup> of the Sunday Times (1923-47), film and literary critic, broadcaster and prolific writer (*"half a million words a year"*).<sup>(60)</sup> Although Houghton had just arrived at MGS as Agate departed, their meetings in later life were to be important, particularly as critics, a skill he (and Houghton) used to the full: *"he recorded the theatre of his time with more vigour and interest than any other critic, except Bernard Shaw, brought to any period"*.<sup>(61)</sup>

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53. MGS Register, p.123.(see Abbreviations).

54. C. Dupré, John Galsworthy : a biography, Collins, 1976, p.135.

55. As the character 'Mr Gunn' in Shaw's Fanny's First Play (1911). See St. John Ervine, Bernard Shaw : his life, work and friends, Constable, 1956, p.430.

56. Rex Pogson, Miss Horniman and the Gaiety Theatre, Manchester, Rockliff, 1952, p.202.

57. Letter from G. Cannan to A.N. Monkhouse, 1 Aug. 1912, ANM 13.

58. MGS Register, p.106.

59. Donald Wolfitt, First Interval, Odhams, 1954, p.218.

60. Agate's obituary in The Manchester Guardian, 9 June 1947, by H. Brighouse.

61. P. Hartnoll (Ed), The Oxford Companion to the Theatre, O.U.P., (3rd edn.), 1967, p.16.

His younger sister May studied for the stage under Sarah Bernhardt and joined Miss Horniman's Company at the Gaiety in 1916.<sup>(62)</sup>

Harold Brighthouse, just one year younger than Houghton, was also an MGS pupil (1893-99)<sup>(63)</sup> and his connection with Houghton after MGS was to be crucial. Brighthouse had in fact attended another school with Agate prior to MGS.<sup>(64)</sup> Brighthouse did not much like his time at MGS, however: "*I tolerated grammar school*".<sup>(65)</sup> His mother wanted him to go to Oxford, an ambition which is perhaps understandable if one bears in mind that his uncle, Edwin Harrison, was considered to be "*a genius in the family*" and indeed Swinburne in 1890 dedicated his poem Loch Torridon to Harrison.<sup>(66)</sup> Brighthouse had no such desire. More will be said of him later. It is surprising, however, to note that Brighthouse, despite an enormous output of plays and journalistic work, has never been the subject of any in-depth academic research.

Of all the MGS acquaintances it is perhaps to one in particular that Houghton owed much. He was Ben Iden Payne (1881-1976) who was at MGS with Houghton (1893-98).<sup>(67)</sup> Apart from becoming Miss Horniman's first director of the Gaiety<sup>(68)</sup> he eventually became director of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford and later Professor of Drama at the University of Texas where a theatre was named after him. He received many awards including the O.B.E. in 1976.<sup>(69)</sup> It was at MGS

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62. O.C.T., p.16. (see Abbreviations).

63. MGS Register, p.106.

64. Harold Brighthouse, What I have had : chapters in autobiography, Harrap, 1953, p.17.

65. *ibid.* p.18.

66. *ibid.* p.15.

67. MGS Register, p.109.

68. Hereafter referred to without the Manchester location. The London theatre of the same name does not feature in this thesis.

69. B.I. Payne, A Life in a Wooden O : memoirs of the theatre, Yale U.P., 1977, p.199. See Ch.3 for more details of Payne.

that his interest in the theatre started:

*I was fortunate enough to win a foundation scholarship at the Manchester Grammar School. During my second year there, it was announced that a performance of 'The Merchant of Venice' would be held. I wasted no time in applying for a part and was cast as Bassanio. It was a wonderful experience, setting the seal upon my resolution.* (70)

Apart from dramatic productions the school also had elocutionary competitions of which a compulsory part was dramatic recitation. (71)

Payne partook and it is not difficult to imagine that Houghton too must have been involved in similar activities, particularly when one recalls Brighouse's references to prizes earlier. Indeed, as we shall see, Houghton became an accomplished amateur actor shortly afterwards.

Further to this the school was not slow to be aware of dramatic trends.

For example, it invited William Poel to give a lecture: *"He pleaded for a closer study of the authors, and an exact following of their instructions, and he explained how their ideas had sometimes been ignored or spoilt in the course of adhering to stage traditions"*. (72)

Such an interest by the staff and pupils must have encouraged Houghton's latent talent, a talent that was ultimately to lead to the school formally commemorating him (see Ch.13).

On leaving MGS in 1897 Houghton commenced work in his father's office in Meal Street, Manchester. (73) According to Brighouse he did not relish the idea of a business life and wrote a no longer extant *"amusing description of the emotions experienced on his translation from an exalted position on the Modern side of <sup>the</sup> Grammar School to the functions of a junior office boy"*. (74)

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70. A Life in a Wooden O, op.cit. p.2.

71. ibid. p.5.

72. Manchester City News, 26 Oct. 1907, H.C. Vol.A.

73. Introduction, p.x. He was nearly 17 then and not 16 as stated by Brighouse.

74. Introduction, p.x.

In fact "*custom brought tolerance for a business life*" although he began "*almost at once, the long apprenticeship through which he hoped to find emancipation from the cotton trade*".<sup>(75)</sup> This view was corroborated in an interview in the 1950's by Houghton's brother-in-law.<sup>(76)</sup> As a salesman of 'grey-cloth' his work would have followed much the same line as that of his father's outlined earlier. It was a 9-5 day<sup>(77)</sup> and continued until mid 1912 when Houghton achieved fame. Of all the drawbacks that the job had for Houghton it at least offered one immeasurable source for character-types: his observant eye focused on the Royal Exchange (reference has already been made to its importance for the cotton trade). One can imagine that keen observation of his (which was to be caricatured at a later date) surveying and assessing the potential of the following typical routine:

*at about half-past two on a Tuesday or a Friday, when High 'Change is in progress, ... [standing] ... in the visitors' gallery, ... [one sees] ... the crowded floor, where probably seven or eight thousand traders are standing in their accustomed places or jostling their way through the sea of humanity to find a buyer or a seller .... [There is] the hum and buzz of hundreds of conversations, growing louder and deeper as business becomes more active .... Very few traders would care to give up their regular attendance ... and even the most autocratic of merchants finds it advisable to put in an appearance for half an hour or so three or four days a week in order to learn the latest market gossip.*<sup>(78)</sup>

It is hardly surprising then that one of his best known characters in his best known play should have originated there: "*One of the principle figures in 'Hindle Wakes' was modelled on a man I met on the Royal Exchange*".<sup>(79)</sup> Agate neatly sums up the Exchange for Houghton:

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75. Introduction, p.x.

76. Unidentified news clipping in the Local History section of Manchester Central Reference Library, filed under Houghton, Stanley. Possibly the Manchester Evening News May-Dec 1954.

77. Introduction, p.xi.

78. The Soul of Manchester, op.cit., pp.217-18.

79. Houghton in an interview with the Daily Dispatch, 24 Aug. 1912, H.C. Vol.I.

*Houghton had a better use for the Manchester Exchange than as a medium for sending calico to Calcutta!* (80)

Despite illness, or the threat of it, Houghton still enjoyed sport and had a strong belief in the value of exercise. (81) At school he had played cricket and then lawn-tennis at which he "played a strong left-handed game" with various clubs in the Whalley Range district of Manchester. (82) Hockey was his best sport in terms of skill and enthusiasm. He not only joined a club and attended its matches, but also played for a team from the Gaiety Theatre after it had been founded in 1908. He also played in London with the Beckenham Club. (83) The matches must have been fairly well known because they formed the basis of a satire in a journal: (the hockey match was Benson's Company v. Horniman's Company at Knutsford).

Tom: Oh! That's Stanley Houghton ...

Jack: Why, he looks more like a 'Varsity student.  
My word, but he is hot stuff, look how he passes ... (84)

Much more interesting, however, is an eye-witness account of another match:

*I can remember one day when a hockey match was in progress. Of a sudden, Houghton appeared, clad in top-hat and morning coat, the hideous but necessary insignia of the conventions that he hated. He had come to watch the game as an antidote to some function which he had been unable to avoid. There was a place vacant in the side, and the writer will not easily forget how Houghton cast coat and hat to the ground and, for the rest of the afternoon, ran violently up and down the muddy field in what had once been immaculate attire.* (85)

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80. J. E. Agate, The Manchester Playgoer, Vol.2, No.1. 1912-14, p.26.  
81. Introduction, p.xi.  
82. *ibid.* p.xii.  
83. *ibid.*  
84. The Guild Journal, January 1911, pp.151-153.  
85. Everyman, 24 Dec. 1913, p.360. An article by Cyril Roberts.

He never played football but did attempt golf on occasions. He was also a good walker, particularly around the Yorkshire Moors "*attired in a Norfolk jacket, a battered deerstalker, hockey 'shorts', and nailed boots*".<sup>(86)</sup> Unfortunately, as Brighouse laments, "*enthusiasm outran discretion*"<sup>(87)</sup> and he was often exhausted to the point of collapse.

He enjoyed travel, particularly after his success began. Apart from the Lake District, North Wales and Yorkshire, he visited Paris, Normandy, Venice, Norway and had a particular feeling for the Channel Islands.<sup>(88)</sup> He was also a competent amateur draughtsman and a good bridge player. Other than the two photographs in The Works there is no complete physical description of Houghton. It would appear<sup>(89)</sup> that he was tall, with a boyish face and straw-coloured hair, rather lean, stiff and awkward, with a cleft-chin and "Caesarean" nose. Ellis summed him up as having "*a face with its aquiline nose something too delicately chiselled*" with "*mobile lips a thought too sensitive, and far-seeing, eloquent eyes*". Dixon Scott, however, saw in his eyes "*something a little fugitive and imploring ... an expression of entreaty always lurk[ing]*". Gerald Cumberland, in his characteristically cynical tone, left it all to one word: "*aristocratic*". According to Brighouse, Houghton's sartorial preference was one of "*self-respect, neatly, without fastidiousness, and certainly without exaggeration*".<sup>(90)</sup> It is

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86. Introduction, p.xii.

87. *ibid.*

88. *ibid.* pp.xii-xiii. Vol.3 of The Works has a photograph of Houghton at St Brelade's Bay, Jersey.

89. These facts are variously drawn from the following: G. Cumberland, Set Down in Malice, Grant Richards, 1919, pp.66-67; A.L.Ellis, The English Review, Jan.1914, pp.274-77; D.Scott, Men of Letters, Hodder and Stoughton, 1916, p.177; T.Pratt in a letter to the editor of The Stage, 20 Aug.1925.

90. Introduction, p.xii.

interesting then to note that on one occasion in London James Agate spotted Houghton dressed "*jauntily ... with a set, defiant rakishness*" and wearing "*the soft sombrero of the poet*",<sup>(91)</sup> whilst on another occasion Cumberland met him in the Strand "*wearing a fur-lined overcoat ... bought for five pounds ... second hand*" and "*looking a trifle like H.B. Irving.*" (*op.cit.*)

Houghton's interest in drama can be traced back to his youth:

*I began playing at writing as a lad, never thinking of seriously devoting myself to dramatic work. I did what hundreds of youths are accustomed to do - conceived and wrote little farces and extravaganzas which were performed privately at Christmas time in my own home and in the homes of my friends. It was a jolly kind of pastime, and though it was all done in a spirit of foolery, I don't doubt it did some little service in helping me to write natural dialogue and invent dramatic situations.* (92)

His brother-in-law remembered how "*Stanley and the family had the basement rigged up as a theatre and I spent many evenings watching his early attempts at playwriting.*"<sup>(93)</sup> This would be the basement at 2 Athol Road, Alexandra Park, and today one may still see the three-roomed cellar with its coal-grates long since extinguished. From there he progressed to actual societies such as Heaton Moor Amateur Dramatic Society and Sale Amateur Dramatic Society.<sup>(94)</sup>

He was able to recall his first major attempt at imaginative work, "*the alteration of a farce called 'Maria'.* In the original there were two characters, and it fell to me to add a third, which, I believe, I played myself."<sup>(95)</sup> No other details are given but it is highly likely that

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91. The Manchester Playgoer, *op.cit.* p.24.

92. Interview with the Manchester Courier, 20 July 1912, p.7.

93. See fn.76.

94. Both groups were represented at his funeral. See The Manchester Guardian, 15 Dec.1913, p.8.

95. Interview with the Daily Dispatch, 24 Aug.1912, H.C. Vol.I.

this would be John Meighan's Maria : a farcical sketch, originally produced at the Town Hall in Rutherglen, Scotland, on 5 December 1890, and later published by Samuel French (but long since out of print). Although it was originally cast for three males, the part of Tom the servant was quite small and his main function was to set the scene initially for the audience and to provide comic asides. Houghton may well have developed the character of Tom. Its synopsis is interesting because the plots of some of his early plays are similar in technique:

CAST

Mr. Joseph Judkins	(played by Mr. W. M. Chisholm)
Mr. Joseph Judkins Jun.	(played by Mr. John Meighan)
Tom, servant to Judkins Jun.	(played by Mr. John Tait)

SCENE

A room in Judkins Junior's house; doors R and L; table C; chairs R and L of table.

SYNOPSIS

This sketch of mistaken identities, opens with Tom arranging the breakfast table for his master Joe Judkins Jun. He confides to the audience that Joe is in love but if his uncle, Joseph Judkins, finds out he will cut the nephew off without a penny. Joe enters for breakfast and sees a letter from his sweetheart, Maria, informing him that she will arrive that day around noon. He summons Tom and tells him to prepare everything but Tom discovers another letter as he clears the table. This time it is from Uncle Joseph announcing that he will also be calling on his nephew at 11.30 that morning. Joe flies into a panic, delays his trip to the racing stable to see his horse - also named Maria - and leaves the house immediately, intending to meet his sweetheart at the station and take her to lunch in a restaurant in order to avoid a confrontation with his uncle. After he has gone, Uncle Joseph arrives and is annoyed to find his nephew is "in Bristol on business" as he particularly wishes to see Joe to announce his engagement to "Dear Little Maria". A telegram arrives and Uncle Joseph, mistakenly believing it is addressed to him, misreads the message and believes "Maria to have gone off her head". A second telegram declaring that "Maria is roaring" causes Uncle Joseph to collapse, whereupon Joe returns and sorts out the mistake - the telegrams being from his horse-trainer. As nephew and uncle talk they discover that they are both engaged to the same Maria, and then each receives a telegram from Maria saying that she is breaking off their engagements and is to marry her father's shopkeeper the following Tuesday.



He also wrote other "little pieces"<sup>(96)</sup> for amateurs, but it was not until he became a member of the Manchester Athenaeum Dramatic Club that he really entered the world of amateur drama:

*Houghton took it seriously, with the deliberate purpose of acting in as many plays as possible, and learning from each all it had to teach him of the playwright's craft.* (97)

Between 1901 and 1912 he appeared in over seventy parts as well as producing.<sup>(98)</sup> Remembering his full working day and his desire to be word-perfect in his acting, and hating slovenliness, one has a picture of total commitment. Some of his parts were: Vere Quecket in The Schoolmistress (Pinero), the Duke of Guisebury in The Dancing Girl (H.A.Jones), Major Saranoff in Arms and the Man (Shaw), the Waiter in You Never Can Tell (Shaw), Sir Daniel Ridgley in His House in Order (Pinero), and Sir Jennings Pike in Little Mary (Barrie).<sup>(99)</sup> The Manchester City News lists others such as Gilbert and Sullivan's Utopia Unlimited (9 Dec.1905 p.7.) with Houghton playing Calyx. It also reviewed one of his Sale Amateur parts on 3 March 1906 in which he played the part of Fritz von Tarlenheim in Anthony Hope's Rupert of Hentzau, a part he "played consistently". (p.7).

The above newspaper also invited Houghton to be an unpaid critic and between March 1905 and September 1906 he contributed some sixty short reviews, mostly on music hall shows and suburban theatre productions.<sup>(100)</sup> As the articles were unsigned it is almost impossible to decide which are Houghton's and it is perhaps fortunate that much better evidence is

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96. Interview with the Glasgow Evening Times, 20 Dec.1912, H.C. Vol.J.

97. Introduction, p.xxiv.

98. *ibid.* pp.xxiv-xxv.

99. *ibid.*

100. *ibid.* p.xxvi.

available in abundance on his critical faculty (see Ch.4).

Meanwhile one must agree with Brighthouse that these articles must have been beneficial:

*he was learning to write, to discover the difference between the written and the printed word, and to express his thoughts concisely in the small space allotted to him. (101)*

His articles, however, were not entirely dramatic as Brighthouse implies; he also contributed "*a few travel sketches and similar things*", as far back as 1903. (102)

Turning to the Athenaeum Club (Manchester) one finds valuable information on Houghton. The building is now part of the City of Manchester Art Gallery but as a Club it was a large institution composed of literary, commercial and social groups. Within it was also the Dramatic Society and whilst some of its papers are to be found in Manchester Central Reference Library, the best are still in the hands of the Society's oldest past President. (103) The Society has fallen in status but is still operational and is located at St.Werburgh's Hall, Wilbraham Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy. In 1982, for example, it staged Love on the Dole (W.Greenwood).

'The Athenaeum Literary and Dramatic Reading Society' to give it its original title, was constituted on 10 May 1847. (104) Its primary

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101. Introduction, p.xxvii.

102. Manchester City News, 11 Dec.1913,p.7, Houghton's obituary notice.

103. Miss H.Blanton, Didsbury, Manchester. Hereafter referred to as the Blanton Collection.

104. W.A.Brabner, Manchester Athenaeum Dramatic Society : Jubilee Commemoration, 1897. Private printing of one thousand copies. No.558 in Blanton Collection. Brabner was a committee member and also a playwright (see A.Nicoll, English Drama 1900-1930, Cambridge U.P., 1973, p.524.)

function was *"reading the works of Shakespeare and other authors; to cultivate a taste for standard dramatic literature and poetry, and to be a source of mutual improvement and amusement to its members"*.<sup>(105)</sup> There was no audience and members merely read to each other. Indeed acting was *"rigorously tabooed"*.<sup>(106)</sup> As a society it seems to have developed specifically to cater for a growing interest in drama within the Athenaeum. In 1839, for example, J. Sheridan Knowles had been invited to lecture on six occasions on dramatic poetry. In *"subsequent years"* Charles Cowden-Clarke had lectured on Shakespeare; Samuel Butler had given eight dramatic readings (unspecified); and Charles Kemble had given thirteen readings from Shakespeare. Indeed, in 1845 Kemble had also given twenty-four lectures on drama. By 1849, just two years after the Society's formation, the Athenaeum developed its 'Social Soirée' in which invited guests like Charles Dickens and Emerson appeared *"at various times"*.<sup>(107)</sup> One of the Society's Presidents (1856-7) was Robert Goulden, the grandfather of Christabel Pankhurst<sup>(108)</sup> who specialised in Shakespearian productions at the Athenaeum. He eventually founded the Prince of Wales Theatre in Salford. In fact, Miss Pankhurst played the part of Cynthia in the opera The Vicar of Bray (Grundy) at the Athenaeum in December 1899.<sup>(109)</sup> Ladies had been admitted as members since 1860.

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105. Manchester Athenaeum Dramatic Society ... 1897, op.cit. p.9.

106. *ibid.*

107. *ibid.* This information is drawn from pp.9-43.

108. David Mitchell, Queen Christabel : a biography of Christabel Pankhurst, Macdonald and Jane's, 1977, p.17.

109. Programme in Blanton Collection.

By 1877 its title had been changed to the 'Manchester Athenaeum Dramatic Society' with membership fixed at 285. During that same year 3,220 people attended its performances (p.43). By 1897 it had a newly constructed stage with the new electric lighting, "*as perfect, proportionately, as that of any first-class theatre*". (p.45). It then regarded itself as "*being ... the Premier amateur dramatic society of Great Britain*" (p.46).

It was to such an institution that Houghton arrived in late 1900 as an ordinary member, a membership which he never terminated, and one which was regarded as "*one of the pleasantest features of its ... history.*"<sup>(110)</sup> In December of 1900 he would have been involved with H.M.S. Pinafore and a one-act play by the aforementioned W.A.Brabner: "*the audience would appear to have feasted well in one evening*" (p.27). The season closed with Barrie's, The Professor's Love Story. By the start of the 1901-2 season, Brabner had become President and another man, Harold Furber, who was to be of importance to Houghton, became Treasurer. The plays selected for that year were The Tyranny of Tears (Haddon Chambers) and a farce, Aunt Jack. It was another successful season, "*the number of subscribers being well-maintained and the financial position satisfactory*" (p.27), culminating in Yeomen of the Guard. The 1902-3 season definitely saw Houghton on stage in The Red Lamp (W.Outram Tristram) (p.33), and the addition of 35 new members (p.28) as well as a new proscenium and new lighting. The profit for the season was £27 (£810 in 1981) which was

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110. N.A.Dawson, One hundred years of amateur acting : Manchester Athenaeum Dramatic Society Commemoration Centenary, Privately printed, 1947, p.27. Copy in Blanton Collection.

almost doubled by the end of the next season. 1903-4 saw amongst others The Gondoliers in December and Facing the Music (J.H.Darnley) and The Bugle Call in February. It is the next season, 1904-5, however, that is significant. Then Harold Furber became President and Stanley Houghton assumed the role of Honorary Secretary (having been Assistant Honorary Secretary 1903-4) from Mr. Harry Williams (p.28). That season was characterised by a special invitation to ladies to see The Ghost of Jerry Bundler (W.W.Jacobs). This was followed by Old Heidelberg (W.Meyer-Foerster) in October and repeated later in the season. Merrie England (B.Hood and E.German), a comic opera, was staged on December 9, 10, and 12, 1904 and besides being *"one of the most successful performances given ... the utmost care and attention was paid to its production and, with excellent staging, the performance proved meritorious in every way"*. (p.29) It had in the audience<sup>(111)</sup> the niece of the President - Dodie Smith (born 1896). She, of course, became a dramatic author and novelist of some repute writing initially under the pseudonym of C.L.Anthony up to 1935.<sup>(112)</sup> Among her better known works are: Autumn Crocus (1937); Dear Octopus (1938); I Capture the Castle (1949) and The One Hundred and One Dalmatians (1956). She will be discussed shortly. Meanwhile the season ended on a note of optimism with its membership at 255 and its profit at £62 (£1,798 in 1981) with Hobby Horse (Pinero). (p.29). 1905-6 saw the farcical comedy Niobe All Smiles (E. and H.Paulton) with Houghton playing the part of *"Hamilton Tompkins, a millionaire art enthusiast"*.<sup>(113)</sup> It also saw The Dancing Girl (H.A.Jones), a drama in four acts, *"the Athenaeum being itself the*

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111. Confirmed in a letter to the writer, 6 Dec.1981.

112. Who's Who, Adam and Charles Black, 1981, p.2409.

113. Programme 20-21 Oct.1905, in Blanton Collection.

*pioneer among amateurs in staging it" (p.29). Utopia Unlimited*  
(Gilbert and Sullivan) was staged in December 1905 and the Manchester City News (noted above) recorded that Houghton played Calynx. A later edition stated that rehearsals had taken over three months (16 Dec. p.7.). In the chorus of that production was Mrs F.G.Nasmith whose husband was shortly to embark on a short writing career with Houghton (see Ch.2.).

As mentioned earlier the Dramatic Society was only a constituent part of a larger whole. Some of the Athenaeum's other parts were used fully by Houghton, particularly its library and newsroom.<sup>(114)</sup> Membership was "*open to all without test or ballot*"<sup>(115)</sup> and the subscription in 1903-05 was 6/6 per quarter (£10 in 1981) or 24/- p.a. (£36 in 1981). Persons under twenty years of age paid 5/- (£7.50 in 1981) or 16/- (£24 in 1981). A notable attraction was "Ladies (to the Library)" 3/- (£4.30 in 1981) or 10/6 (£15 in 1981). The newsroom took the "London, Provincial, Scottish and Irish daily and weekly papers" including the foreign papers of thirteen countries: indeed "*70,000 copies of newspapers, magazines, etc. are placed upon the tables EVERY YEAR*". (*sic*) Its library provision was equally impressive with 21,580 volumes with poetry and drama equalling 1,050 copies and fiction 9,250.<sup>(116)</sup> It may well be that Brighthouse's comment "*he converted his schoolboy French into a practicable instrument*"<sup>(117)</sup> on leaving school was catered

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114. Introduction, p.xvi.

115. From an advertisement in the 1905-6 Season Programme in Blanton Collection.

116. Athenaeum : Library and News Room Committee Minutes. In Manchester Central Reference Library Archives, No. M2/3/5. Aug.1905, p.70.

117. Introduction, p.xxiii.

for by the Athenaeum's 'Foreign Language Conversation Societies' under "*Eminent Masters*".<sup>(118)</sup> By 1911 his French had reached a standard capable of enabling him to offer two short stories in translation by the French writer Anatole Le Braz to The Manchester Guardian. (See Ch.11.).

Returning to Dodie Smith one finds something of the personality of Houghton in her autobiographies.<sup>(119)</sup> Her uncle, Harold Furber, was an amateur actor and eventually President of the Athenaeum Dramatic Society. He was also "*a great friend of Stanley Houghton*".<sup>(120)</sup> Dodie Smith played the little boy in Pinero's His House in Order with Houghton.<sup>(121)</sup> He became a close friend of the family although he only visited them ("*a mile or so away*")<sup>(122)</sup> on a few occasions "*as they had so many meetings at rehearsals*".<sup>(123)</sup> When Dodie Smith moved to London in 1910 her uncle Harold often sent her news about Houghton.<sup>(124)</sup> Harold Furber was a velvet buyer by trade although Dodie Smith maintains his acting ability was such that he could quite easily have gone professional but he hesitated until it was too late.<sup>(125)</sup> He appeared in many of the Athenaeum productions, including The Red Lamp with Houghton. His reputation must have been high with the society not least because when Dodie Smith was involved with rehearsals "*young men came and talked to me ... because I was 'Furber's niece'*".<sup>(126)</sup>

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118. 1905-6 Season Programme in Blanton Collection, op.cit.

119. Dodie Smith, Look Back With Love : A Manchester Childhood, Heinemann, 1974 and Look Back With Mixed Feelings : Volume 2 of an autobiography, W.H. Allen, 1978.

120. Letter to the writer from Dodie Smith, 6 Dec.1981.

121. *ibid.*

122. Look Back With Love, op.cit. p.146.

123. Letter to the writer from Dodie Smith, 16 Jan.1982.

124. *ibid.*

125. Look Back With Love, op.cit. p.11.

126. *ibid.* p.163.

In the Autumn of 1909 Dodie Smith recalls that a group of young actors wanted to play more important parts than they would have been given by the established societies and therefore decided to present "the old Irving success, The Lyons Mail" but since there was copyright in progress "they used an earlier version and the French title Le Courier de Lyon". She played the innkeeper's boy, Joliquet, with Houghton playing the innkeeper.<sup>(127)</sup> A friend of Houghton's, Norman Oddy, directed the play.<sup>(128)</sup> How their friendship started or developed is difficult to ascertain but it did seem to be important since Dodie Smith (letter 8 Feb.1982) informed me that some of the characters in Houghton's The Younger Generation (1909) were based on the Oddy family. Subsequent research has failed to substantiate or develop this lead, however. Oddy eventually became the Society's Secretary. Houghton supervised Dodie Smith's make-up at the production and she recalled that all were nervous except Houghton "in a venerable white wig", and young Mr Oddy.<sup>(129)</sup> The following little anecdote, I believe, shows something of Houghton's character:

*One ... quick change(s) occurred during my first scene, and to cover it, I had a few lines with Stanley Houghton and, after his exit, a short soliloquy, halfway through which a glance into the wood-wings showed me that our leading man was still three-quarters Lesurques when he should have been seven-eighths Dubosc. Frantic helpers were dragging off his breeches, cramming a wig on his head and trying to give him a blue, unshaven chin and a villainous expression, but there was obviously no chance whatever that he would be ready by the time my soliloquy ended. The prompter hissed that I was go to slow, which wasn't easy as all my lines had to express agitation .... Stanley Houghton had now come into the prompt corner to offer help. 'Say you're frightened', he whispered.*

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127. Look Back With Love, op.cit. pp.160-161.

128. *ibid.*

129. *ibid.* pp.163-4.



*But I didn't fancy that line at all. I said something about not liking men who vanished into thin air. This got a laugh and Stanley Houghton nodded approvingly.* (130)

One can imagine Houghton involved completely in the escapade but more importantly, enjoying it. The incident culminated in others forgetting their lines and Dodie Smith, on stage with her back to the audience, where she *"doled out the correct lines to anyone who needed them"*. (131) Houghton took her on stage for a curtain call and she thought that the applause was for her (forgetting that Houghton's The Dear Departed (1908) had already begun to establish him in his own right). No mention of the play's venue is made in Look Back With Love but in reply to my query Dodie Smith recalled that it was the Schiller Institute in Manchester and that some newspaper (which she could not recall) published a photograph of the entire cast. She noted some of the actors: George and Tom Till; Leslie Lowenhaupt and Helen Redmond. (132)

Not long after this episode Dodie Smith actually played the ten-year-old Victoria Slater in Houghton's The Dear Departed in *"some suburb"*. (133) In the above reply she recalled that it was in Didsbury. Houghton very kindly presented her with Lewis Carroll's Alice books. She still has them and informed me that inside Through the Looking Glass he wrote *"To 'Victoria' from a grateful author, Stanley Houghton"*, and Alice's Adventures in Wonderland was signed *"To 'Victoria' from Stanley Houghton"*. (134)

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130. Look Back With Love, op.cit. p.164

131. *ibid.* p.165.

132. Reply dated 8 Feb.1982.

133. Look Back With Love, op.cit. p.166.

134. Letter dated 8 Feb.1982. Victoria was the character she played.

Both books are the Macmillan pocket editions. Shortly after this Houghton wrote a thirty-six line poem entitled 'Algy in Wonderland' which he submitted to The Manchester Guardian<sup>(135)</sup> as a satire on the Peers' resistance to constitutional change.

Dodie Smith played in The Dear Departed once more, in 1910, just before departing for London, only this time it was special: it was at the Athenaeum.

To move forward a few years would not be out of place here. In 1912 when Hindle Wakes was shocking London audiences (see p.297), Dodie Smith and her mother attended one of the performances: *"I soon realised", she recalls, "that 'Hindle Wakes' was linked with ... sex".* It seems that she had frequently been told that it was a *"grave social error"* to have a baby without being married. She recalls that her mother seemed embarrassed throughout the entire evening. Dodie Smith had only been told indirectly what the consequences of getting pregnant would be: *"You'd be ruined and nobody would have anything to do with you".* On questioning the whole issue further she found that her mother *"became evasive".*<sup>(136)</sup> What is interesting about this comment is that it shows a contemporary reaction to the play by one woman and one sixteen year old girl. Such a reaction will be relevant when the play and its consequent furore is studied later. (See Ch.8).

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135. 15 Dec.1909, p.5. A part of it appears in D.Ayerst, Guardian : Biography of a Newspaper, Collins, 1971, p.327, but is erroneously dated 1910.

136. Look Back With Mixed Feelings, op.cit. p.20.

Ironically, some ten years after the above event Dodie Smith wrote a play entitled Pirate Ships (later called Portrait of the Artist's Wives) in which a ruthless young actress asks a man to take her away for a weekend which is reminiscent of the Fanny-Alan escapade in Hindle Wakes. Shortly afterwards it was turned down for production by a "famous American manager" as it was "not quite salacious enough". (137)

Returning to Manchester in 1912 one finds perhaps the saddest memory of all for Dodie Smith and her family when at Christmas,

*Uncle Harold had a surprise for me: Stanley Houghton joined us for Christmas Dinner. He remained quiet, and almost shy, seemingly unchanged by success in the theatre. He told me he would help me to get on the stage and I believe he meant it. When we were about to sit down for dinner it was found that we should be thirteen at table. My uncles were completely unsuperstitious but my mother and my aunts weren't, and it was suggested that my aunty Nan's children should be put at a separate table. But the idea was laughed off, particularly by Stanley Houghton who, I noticed, very determinedly sat down last. (138)*

Houghton had, in fact, made out his Last Will and Testament some fifteen weeks before. (See fn.30). He died on December 11 of the following year.

Houghton became very well known in connection with the Athenaeum, so much so that shortly after the appearance of The Dear Departed reports on him began with such phrases as "Stanley Houghton, whose name is familiar in connection with amateur dramatic productions in Manchester". (139) That such experiences were valuable is undeniable. Just how valuable was acknowledged by Houghton himself:

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137. Look Back With Mixed Feelings, op.cit. pp.265-66.

138. *ibid.* p.22.

139. Manchester Weekly Times, 7 Nov.1908, H.C. Vol.B.

*Naturally, I have always taken a keen interest in the theatre, and the experience I have as an actor and the uses to which I have put that experience (always, of course, as an amateur) helped me considerably to look upon plays from the actor's point of view. Not that I think there is anything particularly mysterious about the technique of drama; I don't. But, as you know, there are thousands of speeches and bits of dialogue which read extraordinarily well on paper, but which are quite impossible when spoken on the stage. The ability to recognise what will 'come over the footlights' is, I suppose, largely instinctive; but that instinct must be developed, and I believe there are few better means of developing it than having some actual experience of the stage. (140)*

Asked if it was an essential prerequisite Houghton answered with characteristic deference: *"I say only that it is useful"*. He cites such *"foremost dramatists"* as Shaw, Bennett and Barrie as having never acted at all and Pinero and Barker as having had *"considerable experience before the footlights"* and yet both groups succeeding. Interestingly, some seven years earlier, amateur dramatics probably had something slightly different to offer Houghton. Although speaking about amateur acting in general, it would not be unfair to see in his words something of the ambitious actor in Houghton himself (he was writing as Dramatic Secretary of the Athenaeum). He maintained that amateur acting was attractive for any one of three reasons: *"variety, the search for fun, or interest in acting"*. He added that *"many and various characters must be played if an actor is to become proficient"*. Humorously he added that *"the local star is rather too fond of trying to be a constellation"*. He was paid £1.11.6 (£46 in 1981) for the article by The Manchester Guardian<sup>(141)</sup> who printed it on 31 August 1905, (p.4) - his first ever contribution.

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140. Interview given to the Manchester Courier, 20 July 1912, p.7.

141. Index to Literary Contributions, Vol.388/8. (Payments made by The Manchester Guardian. Located in the archives of Manchester University (Campus).) See Appendix 3.

There is no doubt that the experience gained by Houghton at the Athenaeum was to be crucial. A study of his early works shows him experimenting, particularly with dialogue. He was indeed right in his assumption that a recognition of what would be successful on stage (*"come over the footlights"*) was largely instinctive; he was, however, realistic enough to realise that such an instinct needed to be developed. These points will be looked at in the next chapter along with two plays he wrote in collaboration and staged at the Athenaeum - his first attempts to go completely public.

## CHAPTER TWO

### EARLY WORKS

Before looking at Houghton's early plays it may be as well to mention his method of working. Brighouse provides valuable information on this point which comments from other sources reinforce. First of all Houghton "*caught his idea*" and then there followed "*a period of incubation*" during which time he, like other writers, carried a small notebook which he used for the "*jotting-down of constructive points and scraps of dialogue*".<sup>(1)</sup> Brighouse himself employed the notebook technique and even advocated its use:

*a diary should be kept; at any rate, a notebook. Impolite to go about the world spying? Quite: an author is a professional eavesdropper and a professional detective, especially in regard to that side of a detective's work which consists in finding motives.*<sup>(2)</sup>

No label could be more apposite than 'professional eavesdropper' for Houghton. Such was his skill when it was developed that it was acclaimed in several quarters. For example, he was caricatured standing on top of a chimney pot on a house, with pen and paper, listening intently. The caption read: "*Mr Stanley Houghton nocturnally overhearing a fireside conversation in Suburbia*".<sup>(3)</sup>

This faculty of observation and its later reconstruction in a play was to be an integral part of his success: "*he had, behind acquired technique, a naturally 'seeing eye', powers of clear observation, exceptional in themselves, disciplined by practice*".<sup>(4)</sup>

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1. Introduction, p.xxxix. These notebooks were given to Brighouse in 1914 by Houghton's father to enable him to prepare his Introduction to The Works. (See p.403) Their whereabouts is unknown.
  2. An Australian magazine, The Triad, 1 June 1925, p.44. An article entitled 'How to set about being a writer', in Brighouse Collection. (See Abbreviations).
  3. Published in The Gaiety Theatre Annual, Christmas 1911, p.66, by Ernest Marriott. Located in Manchester Central Reference Library, Theatre Collection. (See Abbreviations).
  4. What I have had on cit. p.58.

Yet almost paradoxically Houghton was also a modest man to the point of shyness. Agate recalls him as having "*abnormal shyness*" and "*sparrow-like assurance*".<sup>(5)</sup> Most of it was a reticence resulting from his sincerity and his caring manner (of which evidence will be cited later). Anthony L. Ellis perhaps offered a generalisation posthumously:

*We who knew him well loved him for his sincerity, his gentle charm, his generosity of mind and heart, his impish humour, his quaintly gracious angularities of manner, his reticence of spirit, his sensitive pride .... [his] charming self-deprecation ... [and] ... deference.* (6)

The paradox though is somewhat lessened if self-consciousness is considered in relationship to Houghton. One such definition, albeit not directly connected with Houghton, is useful. In the early 1920's Brighouse was employed by an unidentified magazine to write a type of 'thought for the day' under the general heading of 'Life in Little'. One was entitled 'Self-Consciousness':

*The self-conscious man is more observant than the un-self-conscious [sic] .... Observation leads to perceiving opportunities; it implies a vivid interest in life. The world never bores the observant man. Humanity is too amusing.* (7)

This seems to put Houghton's "*sparrow-like assurance*" into perspective. It also does the same for Ellis's final viewpoint:

*To a certain extent Houghton's work was photographic, but only to that degree which renders a photograph a faithful likeness of detail. For the rest, the invincible truthfulness and vital force of his character studies were due to deliberately selective art, fortified by a native 'flair' amounting to genius for rejecting the inessentials with almost unerring judgment and returning only the right phrase, the very pitch and marrow of dramatic dialogue. His conversations depicting the life of the Lancashire mill-folk*

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5. The Manchester Playgoer, op.cit. p.24.
  6. The English Review, Jan.1914, pp.274-277. Ellis was the dramatic critic of the Daily Dispatch and The Star and one time manager of the Criterion Theatre, London (see Who Was Who in the Theatre 1912-76, Vol.2, Pitman, 1978, pp.753-4). He was also Houghton's literary agent in London and eventually produced Houghton's Fancy Free (see Ch.7).
  7. Dated 23 Sept. 1924, Brighouse Collection.

*and 'bourgeoisie' were not mere gramophone records, but brilliantly observed speech, the essential stuff of self-revealing character. (8)*

His acute observation and self-conscious attitude were complementary. Yet he was fully aware of its paradoxical nature, an awareness that often worried, him, as seen in his disclosure to Brighthouse that his "cursed self-consciousness" caused him concern: "I am so afraid of being suspected of covering up insincerity". (9)

Observation was a necessary prelude; from it he developed his ideas quickly:

*Every character [was] decided and each scene in outline to the last. There was ... no ecstatic dashing at a play, directly from the coming of its subject to the first act, with the almost inevitable 'petering out' of material before reaching the third act. He knew the full course of his play before he wrote a line of dialogue ... from the moment of deciding on his subject, progress was extraordinarily rapid. (10)*

From the scenario he progressed to the dialogue and rarely rewrote anything and never more than once. According to Brighthouse the alterations he did make were not improvements:

*they were, in fact, in the nature of concessions. The line, as written, would be the sincere result of authentic observation; the alteration a sop to the pit, a line to win a laugh. (11)*

Houghton, he believed, was fearful of aiming above the heads of his audiences. His compromise was no more than "the surrender of the artist, still distrustful of his powers, to the man who knew the theatre through and through". (ibid). Indeed, many critics believed that the success which came with Hindle Wakes (1912) was never repeated because Houghton wrote to order - he gave the theatre managers

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8. The English Review, op.cit. p.276.

9. What I have had, op.cit. p.177.

10. Introduction, p.xxxix.

11. Introduction, p.xl.



what they wanted much more than what he wanted to give to the audiences. This point will be considered later (see p.334). Meanwhile, up to 1912, his output was great, particularly if one bears in mind his full-time occupation and his work for The Manchester Guardian (see Ch.4.). Meticulous planning and the advantage of rarely having to rewrite anything must have helped - he got it right first time. His productivity, however, did not end there. Gerald Cumberland, in his usual cynical tone, recalls:

*I need scarcely say that Houghton was, so far as his plays were concerned, an industrious man of business. When the real artist has finished a work, he ceases to take interest in it; but, with Houghton, when a play was completed his interest in it immediately intensified. He sent his plays everywhere: to the provinces, to London, to America, to agents. As soon as a play came back "returned with thanks", out it went again by the next post. And he pulled strings - oh! ever so gently, but he pulled them. (12)*

From 1911 he typed his plays (and many of his letters), a point illuminated yet again by Cumberland on a visit to Houghton at his home in Athol Road:

*When we had finished our meal he took me to his study. Near the window was a typewriter; in the typewriter was a sheet of paper half covered with script. There were very few erasures.*

*"I always compose straight on to the machine", said Houghton .... "It is a comedy for Cyril Maude .... (13) he wanted a comedy, and he wanted me to write it. That was a fortnight ago. Well, the thing's nearly finished; in another week it will be on its way to London. Rather quick work, don't you think?". (14)*

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12. Set Down in Malice, op.cit. p.58.

13. See Ch.7. p.200.

14. Set Down in Malice, op.cit. pp.60-61.

As mentioned earlier (p.33.) Houghton's note-books probably no longer exist; their value would have been immeasurable. Until recently, however, one has had to take Brighouse's word alone that his method of working was as above. For example, he tells us that "*The full scheme of 'Hindle Wakes' was sketched on a few scattered papers of a penny notebook*", (Introduction, p.xxxix). Proof has now come to light which corroborates all Brighouse has to say. It is the only known surviving example and it accompanies the manuscript of Ginger (1910), a four act play (see Ch.6.). On it one finds the characters' names with some provisional traits followed by idiosyncrasies and the props required for each act. There then follows a brief synopsis of each act and then a much more detailed outline, particularly concerning exits and entries and the general movements of characters along with the emotions displayed on stage. This particular plan shows evidence of revision in just two places: one is a "*Revised Act 4*" synopsis, whilst the other is merely a pencilled reminder to him to "*focus on Ginger a bit*" in Act 1.<sup>(15)</sup> Another example of minor alterations is to be found in the prompt script of The Dear Departed (1908), a point discussed in the next chapter.

Apart from the alteration of Maria (see p.18.) the earliest known titles by Houghton (no longer extant) are three one-act plays: After Naseby; The Last Shot; The Blue Phial, the nature of which

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15. MS. now in the Stanley Houghton Collection.

Brighthouse contends *"is sufficiently indicated by their titles"*. (Introduction, p.xxiii). By this he probably means that they were typical melodrama titles. They were *"garrulous, but, on the technical side, give clear signs of the extraordinary workmanship which was to characterise his maturer plays."* (ibid.). In 1902-03<sup>(16)</sup> he did write his first three-act play, the title of which is not given by Brighthouse. Fortunately, a play (unpublished and previously unknown) has just come to light which fits Brighthouse's description of it as *"a mixture of comedy, melodrama, and farce, with a plot which, wordy as its treatment is, has no little ingenuity. The dialogue is unequal, but shows Houghton's individual manner already forming itself."* (Introduction, pp.xxiii-iv). This belief is further corroborated by the fact that the play, Adam Moss : Bachelor, written in two school exercise books<sup>(17)</sup> of some 121 pages, carries on the inside cover of one of the exercise books three addresses of Houghton's: his home (Athol Road), the Athenaeum, and his place of work - all of which taken together date it around 1902. Its discovery is valuable for reasons other than its intrinsic worth: it shows Houghton's development in dramatic terms. For example, in it he uses the aside, a convention which in the professional theatre had begun to disappear in the 1890's.<sup>(18)</sup> In his next known work this convention is absent. It also shows the influence upon him of writers like Wilde, a point Brighthouse notes as a preparation, a

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16. Introduction, p.xxiii.

17. Now in the Stanley Houghton Collection.

18. See The Revels History of Drama in English, Vol.7, Methuen, 1978, p.12.

practice for the future: *"if here he derives from Wilde, the spare economy of the later plays is the vital characteristic of the writing."*

(Introduction, p.xxiv.) One sees him experimenting with dialogue, attempting to add rhyme in the form of couplets or using assonance for verbal emphasis. Only a few examples are present but they do stand out as being deliberate. For example,

Doctor: ... *What will Sir Christopher say?*

[Roger] Monk: *Ay - and what will Matilda pay?* (p.98.)

and

Doctor: .... *Have you no mercy?*

Monk: *Has she no money?* (p.99.)

The plot is also a development and follows on from Maria in that whilst similar in outline it is now all his own work. It evolves around two triangular relationships: two men wanting to marry one woman and one woman wanting to be married but with two suitors. The situation becomes complex and by Act 3 the conventional technique of melodrama, whereby rooms off-stage prevent characters meeting until the last possible moment and thereby enhancing suspense and prolonging the denouement, is employed skilfully. Indeed, the manuscript has virtually no alterations on it. There are several extremely witty conversations and clever manipulations of characters' movements to provide minor climaxes. It is a competent piece of work whose complexities and fourteen characters are well balanced. The theme was indeed to be re-used by Houghton at a later date in two more plays: The Hillarys (1911-12) and The Weather (1913). (See Chs.6 and 9 respectively).

From 1903 to 1907 Houghton wrote at least one short play a year according to Brighouse (Introduction, p.xxiv). He then cites

The Old Testament and the New as an example of those early works.

However, it is my contention that that play is not 1905 as Brighthouse maintains but later. This point will be taken up shortly.

Fortunately when Adam Moss : Bachelor came to light so too did another early work previously unknown and unlisted: Midnight Visitors: a nocturne in one act (unpublished).<sup>(19)</sup> Although undated it too has the hallmarks of the early Houghton. It has some of the techniques employed in Adam Moss : Bachelor but the plot unfolds with only five characters. It concerns the inevitable daughter, Adelaide, aged 29, whose father, Dr. Percival, refuses his consent to her marriage. Houghton, in the opening lines, immediately employs a focal point: the doctor's sugaring of his nightly bread and milk drink. Being absent-minded the character frequently adds three lumps at a time to it. Houghton exploits this comic point to the full. Midway through the play he replaces it with another: that of the daughter's fiancé repeatedly banging the table with his fist in bouts of anger during the midnight tryst in the house. The humour in the play is delivered quickly particularly the conversation held between the doctor and the burglar he catches in his home. It is one of the longest sustained exchanges of wit and repartee ever written by Houghton. There are other types of humorous dialogue such as the place in which a robbery at a nearby residence is discussed. The doctor tells his daughter that the owner, a woman, was:

Dr. P:   *... awakened by a noise in the room and found a  
man on her chest - no - in her chest of drawers.*

and then,

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19. Now in the Stanley Houghton Collection. Entirely handwritten.

Dr. P:               *... She sat up in bed & watched him, and then  
threw off her clothes.*

Adel[aide]:       *What did she to that for?*

Dr. P:               *Her bed clothes, her bed clothes of course ... (p.4)*

All, as expected, works out for the best and the curtain descends on a happy outcome. Interestingly p.17 uses the saying 'Hobson's Choice' in its normal application. Such a phrase was to be the basis of a later connection between Houghton and Brighouse (see p.88).

Two pieces of information in the play may help to establish its date of composition. One is a reference to the doctor's wedding: 1875 (p.17). The addition of his daughter's age gives the year 1906. Secondly there is a direct reference to Keir Hardie (p.18) who became leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party in 1906.

There remains one other play which, like the previous two, has only just come to light - The General's Word, a play in one-act.<sup>(20)</sup> This play was not known to exist before and its discovery has produced an interesting fact about Houghton. The two carbon typescripts are identical in all respects except for the author's name: both carry the name 'William Stanley' (Houghton's Christian names) but only one has his correct signature and then only inside. Both carry stickers from the International Copyright Bureau Ltd., London - the firm which eventually managed the commercial side of Houghton's plays. This play may well represent Houghton's first attempt at either publication or more likely a professional performance in London - an ambitious venture.

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20. Two carbon typescripts now in the Stanley Houghton Collection. Each bears the stamp of E. Morrison, Copying Office, 88 Mosley Street, Manchester.

The plot reminds one of Puccini's Tosca (1900) which was, of course, based on Sardou's play La Tosca (1887). Houghton's play is not an imitation of either, however: its relationship is more generic than direct. The General's Word, with its ironic title, hinges on a deceit. The setting is the headquarters of a French garrison in a small German town during the Napoleonic Wars. It tells the fate of Franz who is about to be hanged, allegedly for spying for the Germans. On the intercession of his fiancée a reprieve is granted but only at a price. Emmie tells Franz that:

*I had to pay a price for your life. The greatest price  
that a woman can pay ... to save your life. I have  
given my honour. (p.6)*

Meanwhile, the General appears and highlights the rather sick irony of the title:

Emmie: *You promised me he should go free.*

General: *No, pardon me, I promised you I would not  
hang him.*

Emmie: *Oh! ... You promised me I should take him  
home, to-day.*

General: *I keep my word. You are at liberty to  
take him home now - he's been shot.*

(p.13)

Emmie, on seeing Franz's body stabs the General to death and the curtain falls.

The play was probably written about the time of Midnight Visitors, or perhaps not long afterwards. It marks a change in Houghton's style: it lacks any form of humour and in it one finds occasional attempts by him to achieve what Brighouse was later to identify in The Old Testament and the New, as "*emotional effects*" (see p.51): a sincere exchange of feelings by characters via dialogue as opposed to melodramatic acting. Houghton was never to find as much success with

this type of play as with comedy although he tried three more times (see pp.53-54). It remains unpublished.<sup>(21)</sup>

The apparent rejection of The General's Word may have encouraged Houghton's next move. During 1906 he worked on a collaboration with Frank G. Nasmith and wrote what until recently was considered to be his first extant play. Nasmith had been an Athenaeum drama member for some time, becoming a committee member in 1905.<sup>(22)</sup> It would seem that professionally he was involved in the cotton and allied industries and perhaps knew Houghton as a business man from the Royal Exchange as well as at the Athenaeum.<sup>(23)</sup> He was a well-known amateur actor,<sup>(24)</sup> and director as noted by The Manchester Guardian in their review of a new play by the Athenaeum Dramatic

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21. There does exist another one-act play with an almost identical plot entitled Tricked by Laurence Cowen, which in 1911 was refused a licence by the Lord Chamberlain because of the heroine's yielding herself to the threatening General. See A. Nicoll, English Drama 1900-1930, C.U.P., 1973, p.567, and R. Findlater, Banned: a review of theatrical censorship in Britain, MacGibbon and Kee, 1967, p.12.
  22. His name appears for the first time as a Committee Member in a 1905-06 programme in the Blanton Collection.
  23. He seems to have been the editor of two journals, Textile Recorder, and Silk Journal, a member of both the Council of Textile Industries and the Council of the British Assoc. of Managers of Textile Works. He was also secretary to the World Cotton Conference. Along with his father he was a registered patent agent and published books connected with his trade: The Artificial Silk Handbook (compiler and editor), Heywood, 1926, and Recent Cotton Mill Construction and Engineering, Heywood, 1909, (3<sup>rd</sup> Edit<sup>n</sup>. by the late J. Nasmith and F. Nasmith). He also contributed at least twenty articles to The Manchester Guardian on similar topics (see Index to Literary Contributions, Vol.388/8, University of Manchester archives (campus)).
  24. Introduction, p.xxvi.



Society's secretary Norman Oddy (see p.27 supra) Enthusiasm: "it was excellently acted [and directed] in a manner which might be called *Gaiety second team style*, by Mr. Frank Nasmith".<sup>(25)</sup> Such a parallel was indeed an honour. Moreover, The Manchester Guardian's dramatic criticism was renowned for its integrity and veracity. (See Ch.3). Houghton in fact reviewed a play for <sup>the</sup> same paper in 1911 given by the Athenaeum. It was Pinero's The Thunderbolt in which he noted that "Mr. Frank Nasmith ... may be complimented on the producing". (27 Feb., p.14). He had also directed Dodie Smith in Pinero's His House in Order at the Athenaeum.<sup>(26)</sup>

The play was entitled The Intriguers, in four acts. Brighouse did not see fit to include it in The Works, describing it merely as "a *steeplechase over very rough country after a packet of stolen naval plans*."<sup>(27)</sup> It was formally submitted to The Lord Chamberlain for licence (Houghton's first ever application) which it received on 17th October 1906.<sup>(28)</sup> The only known copy of the play was believed to be a typed copy lodged with the British Library (MSS. Dept.)<sup>(29)</sup> but recently a bound typescript has come to light.<sup>(30)</sup> which fortunately also has a programme bound within. The application for licence is in Houghton's own hand with authorship given as Frank Nasmith and Stanley Houghton (in that order). The programme not only gives the venue and

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25. 21 Feb. 1914, Brighouse Collection. The reputation of the *Gaiety* is looked at in Ch.3 of this thesis.
  26. Letter from Dodie Smith in Blanton Collection, dated 14 Feb.1977.
  27. Introduction, p.xxvi.
  28. Lord Chamberlain's Plays (L.C.P.) Vol.30, MSS.Dept. of The British Library (see p.xvi for a comment on these volumes).
  29. Now on microfilm in the Stanley Houghton Collection.
  30. Now also in the above collection.

exact dates of production (Friday and Saturday 19th and 20th October 1906, 7.30 pm in the Lecture Hall of the Athenaeum) but also reveals that Houghton played the hero, Leonard Ainsworth, whilst Nasmith played Kellett (Ainsworth's servant) and also produced and stage-managed it. As Harold Furber (see p. 26 supra) appeared as Oliver Brinton it is not surprising that his niece Dodie Smith and her family attended a performance, an event she recalled seventy-one years later:

*My critical family thought it promising but not quite good enough. I enjoyed it unrestrainedly. (31)*

A press review saw it in a reasonably good light:

*The Manchester Athenaeum Dramatic Society ... broke out of the ruts of custom by producing a play by two of its own members .... 'The Intriguers' it is true, depends for its main interest on the number of its incidents and the quickness with which they follow each other, rather than upon the subtle duplications and developments expected from a master hand ... the production compares very favourably indeed with the majority of its kind which are intended to thrill more than impress. (32)*

As far as the acting was concerned little could be faulted. With its eleven characters,

*The acting was too good in general to necessitate any distinction being made between the efforts of the members of the company. (ibid.)*

The play's relative success no doubt added to the prestige enjoyed by the Society in that season, its diamond jubilee, when it was affirmed that in all probability no former period had seen the Society in "a more flourishing condition".<sup>(33)</sup> It also marked yet another, albeit slight, advance for Houghton. The first two acts are certainly well

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31. Letter in Blanton Collection, 14 Feb. 1977.

32. Manchester City News, 27 Oct. 1906, p.7.

33. N.A.Dawson, One hundred years of amateur acting : Manchester Athenaeum Dramatic Society Commemoration Centenary, 1947, op.cit. p.30.

written and constructed but unfortunately the last two acts tail off into blatant melodrama. As a point of interest it may be worth noting that the bound typescript has two additional lines not found in the Lord Chamberlain's copy. They are the final lines of the play:

Nora: (holding plans to him) Leonard!  
Leon[ard]: (understanding) Nora!  
(he crushes her and the plans in an embrace).

The two playwrights must have been very pleased at the time with their success because almost immediately they set about working on another play: a one-act entitled The Reckoning. This was submitted to The Lord Chamberlain for a licence which it received on 23 July 1907.<sup>(34)</sup> This is the only known copy in existence<sup>(35)</sup> and is completely hand-written by Houghton. The play's title page reveals that its original title was The Day of Reckoning, the title which it reassumed no later than 1912.<sup>(36)</sup> This time Houghton's name appears first. It would seem that the play was acted the day before its licence became operative. Brighouse saw it as "*a romantic play*" (Introduction, p.xxvi) which after its professional run at the now extinct (i.e. 1914) Queen's Theatre, Manchester,<sup>(37)</sup> had "*a career as*

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34. L.C.P. Vol.17, No.420.

35. A copy of which is now on microfilm in the Stanley Houghton Collection.

36. See A.Nicoll, English Drama 1900-1930, op.cit. p.734.

37. It was the first of three short plays for the week 22-27 July 1907, produced by Harold Neilson. The others were A Lonely Life (Sutro) and The Ghost of Jerry Bundler (W.W.Jacobs).

*a music-hall sketch*". (ibid.) Fortunately a more detailed criticism is to hand in the form of a review by The Manchester Guardian, a review made all the more important because it bears the initials of its writer - A.N.M. This was Allan Noble Monkhouse, journalist, dramatist and novelist who has already been referred to (see p. 7 supra) and who was to become one of the paper's most respected and gifted writers and also a personal friend of Houghton's (see Ch.4). His detailed criticism warrants consideration. He saw it as having "*something of merit*". As one of three short plays being produced (see fn. 37) he singled out The Reckoning, not least because "*Manchester folk ... would like to have dramatists of [their] own*". Monkhouse was a keen advocate of such an idea and not long after this event was to propagate the idea even more and indeed influence Houghton (see Ch.3). He did not rate the play highly, but that did not matter. What was more important than their "*not yet [being] experienced playwrights*" was the fact that "*the reception of the piece was highly encouraging*". The plot was straightforward:

*a romantic little play ["in 1790"]<sup>(38)</sup> with moonlight and rapiers, and the appeal for mercy to a battered rake ["Merlin, a paid bully, powerfully built"] whose sentimental reminiscences betray the soft spot in him. It goes further than this, however, for the appeal of the girl, ["Gabrielle de Richefin, a French refugee"] who is his lost love's daughter, for her brother's life reveals to this kindly bully that his patron ["Trevor, a man about town, over 40, slightly built and nice looking though effeminate"] is the villain who has long ago betrayed him.*

*So the piece ends briskly with a duel and the villain's death.<sup>(39)</sup>*

Monkhouse was concerned that the movement of the earlier passages of the play was "*too slow*", particularly for a piece "*which makes no*

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38. Information in square brackets is taken from the L.C.P. copy of the play.

39. The Manchester Guardian, 23 July 1907, p.6.

*pretence to go deep into the situation".* He saw the acting as a hindrance to the play's success, particularly since *"the authors have attacked the drama from the practical side, and perhaps they could hardly be expected to put much character or humanity into so slight a play"*. Indeed, *"they have conformed with ability to the conditions, and it is the merit as well as the defect of their play that it is theatrical"*. Houghton must certainly have read this review (his favourite paper) and taken careful note of it, particularly the final lines which not only commended the dramatists and saw their work as *"experimental and suggestive"* and indeed *"worth doing"*, but predicted a future: *"one feels that better things are to come"*. Houghton must have wondered what was missing. He had changed his methods slightly as we have seen. Monkhouse's advice must have hit him forcibly:

*It must be a strong dramatic talent that is not caught and imprisoned within the acting tradition, compounded of passions outworn and old, rehearsed effects.*

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that in his next play he was to use a somewhat different type of approach.

At the height of his fame in 1912 Houghton was to recollect these two collaborations, perhaps minimising or not realising their basic importance in his development. He told an interviewer that *"they were not particularly successful, and I don't suppose they deserved any more success than they won"*.<sup>(40)</sup> Not long afterwards The Manchester Guardian viewed them in a similar light:

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40. Manchester Guardian, 20 July 1912, p.7.

*These were trifles and may be dismissed with the comic operas which were boyhood's contribution to the gaiety of his companions".*

(11 Dec.1913, p.16. - obituary)

Both plays remain unpublished.

The next play to be mentioned by Brighouse is The Old Testament and the New, a play in one act. However, he dates the play as 1905 without further evidence, listing it as "*an example of his early work*". (p.xxiv). It is my contention that the play is later than this (albeit not much), and has better qualities than Brighouse implies. As we have seen Houghton's progress was always positive: this was his tenth play. Coupled with this is the fact that by this time (1907/8) he had reviewed some thirty-seven plays for The Manchester Guardian (see Appendix 4) and therefore seen some of the hallmarks of success. Ironically, however, Houghton never acknowledged this play in any interviews he gave and indeed it was never acted until after his death. The timing of its first production was not accidental: it coincided with the imminent publication of The Works of Stanley Houghton (July 1914) and also with the movement to establish a scholarship in his name and a memorial, a movement begun officially on 9 June 1914 (see Ch.13). The timing was not a ploy by the Gaiety to capitalise on the above events since Houghton had been a particular favourite of not only Miss Horniman but indeed of the whole company. Moreover, Miss Horniman never had to employ such tactics as the theatre's reputation alone was advertisement enough. The play also happened to be ideally suited to the Gaiety - a mould long since established by Houghton.<sup>(41)</sup>

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41. These points are expanded upon and developed throughout the thesis.

It will be necessary to move forward a few years to study the play's reception.

It was submitted to the Lord Chamberlain for licence which it received on 19 June 1914.<sup>(42)</sup> Interestingly the play is the only one ever submitted to the Lord Chamberlain that does not carry the author's name. The Examiner of Plays' review bears note.<sup>(43)</sup>

*This is a gloomy little study of the mental struggle of a worthy but narrow-minded Dissenter between the teachings of the Old Testament and the New as his guide for his treatment of his erring but penitent daughter. At first he tries to shelve the responsibility of forgiving the unhappy girl on the shoulders of the man who was in love with her when she ran away with someone else. But this lover can no longer marry her even if he would, as it turns out that he has just taken to himself a wife. So the stern father shows his child the door and proceeds to read his usual chapter from the Bible before going to bed. Crude in its painful pessimism: but recommended for licence. E.A. Bendall [Examiner of Plays].*

This review, and indeed that of Brighouse's for The Manchester Guardian the day after its first production,<sup>(44)</sup> however, missed the central irony of the whole play, a point to be discussed shortly.

The play opened at the Gaiety on 22 June 1914 for six nights with Houghton's The Younger Generation (1909). It was announced as being seen for the "first time on any stage".<sup>(45)</sup> It must have been successful because it was back on again at the theatre in July and

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42. L.C.P. Vol.22, No.2774.

43. See p.xvi for a comment on the Examiner of Plays' reviews.

44. 23 June 1914, H.C. Vol.N.

45. Gaiety Playbills, in Manchester Central Reference Library, Theatre Collection, ref. Mall7.

August of that same year.<sup>(46)</sup> Brighthouse saw it as being "typically a Gaiety one-act play", and marvelled at how it had "escaped Miss Horniman's net" earlier.<sup>(47)</sup> He commented that "the house was deeply impressed" but lamented the fact that a tragedy should be played after a comedy. Now this is an interesting point: why was a one-act play, which traditionally was used as a curtain-raiser, given prime position? The two plays taken together have a similar theme - the effects of Puritanism upon the generations, a theme also to be seen later in The Master of the House (1909) and The Fifth Commandment (1911). The tragic play following on the comic treatment would tend to reinforce the position of the playwright on the matter. Brighthouse in fact hinted at this aspect. He saw Houghton using "emotional effects which he afterwards laid aside for pure comedy .... Its subject is that sort of Puritanism which had for Houghton an attraction so abiding".<sup>(48)</sup> Brighthouse further maintained that in The Old Testament and the New Houghton gave the Puritans "their due" unlike in The Younger Generation where Houghton hardly concealed his dislike of Puritanism: "Houghton admits that there is an angle from which Christopher Battersby's<sup>(49)</sup> fanaticism may appear admirable". Now at first this does seem plausible but on closer examination one particular line in the play seems to prove that Houghton not for one minute allowed Christopher's philosophy, based on the Bible, to carry

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46. i.e. 13, 15, 18 July with The Younger Generation and 24-26 Aug. with The Kiss Cure (1914, R. Jeans). See Manchester Gaiety and Midland Theatre Programmes, Vol.4., Manchester Central Reference Library, Theatre Collection, ref. Ma 166.

47. The Manchester Guardian, op.cit.

48. *ibid.*

49. Interestingly the surname of Houghton's employer.



any justification for his treatment of his daughter. Approximately half way through the play<sup>(50)</sup> Martha reminds Christopher that the night's Bible reading was to be St. John, Chapter eight. Christopher comments that he much preferred the Old Testament:

Chris: *There was justice done in those days. When a man sinned he was punished. God sent his lightnings and destroyed. There's a deal too much forgiveness about the New Testament. It seems a tempting of Providence to read it to some people.*

No more is said and the play continues with Mary, the daughter, returning for forgiveness after having eloped with a married man some three years earlier and who has since died. She insists that *"we've been husband and wife in the sight of Heaven"* (p.18). On his eventual rejection of her from his house he even refuses to let her embrace her mother - *"You shan't touch her. She is pure"*. (p.23). Mary leaves *"to the London streets"* and *"damnation"* (p.23) and the play ends with Christopher saying to his wife: *"We'll just read that chapter together, mother, before we go to rest. The eighth chapter of St. John's Gospel"*. (p.23). Here now is the whole biting irony of the play - an irony which is completely missed unless one knows that chapter eight of St. John's gospel is the account of the adulteress brought before Jesus and containing the well-known phrase, *"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her"*, and of course the forgiveness of Jesus for her adultery: *"sin no more"*.

The play also has echoes of what was later to be seen in Hindle Wakes (1911). Mary and Fanny are almost alike in appearance but Fanny is

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50. The Works, Vol.3., p.15.

much more independent than Mary - almost a case of a developed Mary emerging as a grown up Fanny Hawthorn. Mary did not marry her intended simply because she did not love him, but more importantly because *"I felt I must make an effort and be free; get away from it all and go with the one I loved"*. (p.18) Fanny, on the other hand, spent the weekend with Alan for no other reason than it was *"a lark"*: she too had no intentions of repairing the damage by marrying him (see Ch.8.). Mary likewise gave no indication that she would accept marriage from Edward to appease her father. Like Fanny, Mary is left out of the conversation until the last possible moment. Altogether it is a much weaker portrayal of the 'new' woman but then it being a one act as opposed to a three act play necessarily limited it and moreover if in 1912 Houghton was to cause a moral outcry, how much more voluminous would it have been for him in 1907, or indeed 1905, (the date Brighthouse gives as its composition)?

A general consideration of Houghton's early works does show a pattern. Of the ten plays, seven were comedies of the melodramatic type, a commonplace genre of the day. However, by The Reckoning the comedy was completely absent<sup>(51)</sup> and as such the action (as Monkhouse pointed out) had to carry it almost completely: only rarely does the dialogue substitute satisfactorily. The Old Testament and the New not only maintained this complete absence of humour, but also located itself

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51. It was absent from the earlier play The General's Word, which was not acted, however.

firmly in the present and relied fully on the dialogue for its success because the action was almost nil. Here the dialogue, rooted for the main part in the present, held. Houghton for the first time was achieving that skill of reproducing on stage an ordinary Northern household at the time of a not uncommon crisis. Because it was far from perfect and perhaps too cruel psychologically for those audiences which at the time of its composition would have expected humour, Houghton held it back. Yet it marked a distinctive move: he had found his medium; life as he saw it and not melodrama. But humorous dialogue was also his forte. It was to be a further year before he realised what he ought to do: he combined the two and wrote his first successful one-act play, The Dear Departed. Apart from The Master of the House (1909) he never again omitted from his plays that humorous dialogue of which he was later considered to be a master. Nor did he ever leave his contemporary environment: his settings (even in Trust the People (1912)) were recognisably Edwardian. The success begun by this realisation will form the basis of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER THREE

### MANCHESTER

If Houghton was to establish a reputation as a playwright he knew he would have to do it in the professional theatre, despite the local prestige of the Athenaeum. He had, as seen (p. 41 supra), attempted London but without success. Yet London was not the sole mecca for theatre or indeed culture: Manchester was certainly a city to be reckoned with. Arnold Bennett recognised this in 1907. Speaking of the City's "*artistic and intellectual primacy*", he mentioned that

*there is no place which can match its union of intellectual vigour, artistic perceptiveness, and political sagacity.* (1)

Indeed, he believed that in London's patronisation of Manchester one could detect "*a secret awe, an inward conviction of essential inferiority.*" (p.262) This aspect was to be the crucial factor in attracting a venture which was shortly to help change the face of drama in this country and establish Houghton's reputation as a talented playwright. There is no doubt that his thoughts centred around the idea of being a playwright of renown in Manchester initially and then London and ultimately overseas. From mid 1907 his energies turned towards an enterprise being proposed by his school friend Ben Iden Payne on behalf of Miss A.E.F. Horniman. Meanwhile he never lost his affection for the Athenaeum but was soon to find that his spare time was taken by another institution - the Gaiety Theatre. Moreover, the Athenaeum was never to lose its affection for its most famous son, whose death in 1913 was felt to be "*a great blow keenly felt by all his old comrades.*"<sup>(2)</sup> In its 81st Season it paid its tribute to him by

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1. Arnold Bennett, Paris Nights and Other Impressions of Places and People, Hodder and Stoughton, 1913, p.261.
  2. N.A. Dawson, op.cit. p.33.

performing his best known play, Hindle Wakes (1911).

Manchester's coat of arms bears an open book, representing its past and present involvement with learning and culture. In 1759, for example, James Thyer, Librarian of the renowned Chetham's Library (which itself "*helped create a taste for reading*")<sup>(3)</sup>, edited some of the works of Samuel Butler (the author of Hudibras) and in 1781 the City's Literary and Philosophical Institution was founded.<sup>(4)</sup> As well as having its own authors the City was also written about by other writers. For example, the Peterloo Massacre inspired Shelley's Masque of Anarchy (1819); Elizabeth Gaskell not only married a leading Manchester Minister in 1832<sup>(5)</sup> but also wrote many of her novels in the City; Dickens immortalized the Grant brothers of Manchester<sup>(6)</sup> in Nicholas Nickleby (1838-9) as the Cheeryble brothers; Harrison Ainsworth (ex Manchester Grammar School) based some of his novels on "*reminiscences of Manchester*"<sup>(7)</sup>; the weekly periodical The Examiner (1808-80), launched by John and Leigh Hunt and which "*exercised a considerable influence on the development of English journalism*"<sup>(8)</sup>, was owned by Alexander Ireland, a distinguished Manchester scholar and specialist on Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt. He also hosted Emerson in 1847<sup>(9)</sup>; 1876 saw Mrs. Linnaeus Banks' The Manchester Man and 1879 saw Mrs. Louisa

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3. F.A.Bruton, A Short History of Manchester and Salford, op.cit. p.257.

4. W.H.Brindley, The Soul of Manchester, op.cit. p.132.

5. *ibid.* p.135.

6. *ibid.* p.134.

7. *ibid.*

8. The Oxford Companion to English Literature (3rd edn.), O.U.P., 1958, p.275.

9. W.H.Brindley, op.cit. p.137.

Potter's Lancashire Sketches. It is little wonder then that De Quincey (ex Manchester Grammar School) was able to recall that

*In Manchester I have witnessed more interesting conversation, as much information, and more eloquence in conveying it, than is usual in literary cities or places professionally learned .... The time is more happily distributed ... the days given to business and active duties, the evening to relaxation ... so that books are more cordially enjoyed.* (10)

Societies of various sorts were popular in Manchester. There existed The Spenser Society; The Manchester Goethe Society; The Manchester Literary Club; The Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society; and The Statistical Society of Manchester ("*the oldest in the Kingdom*").<sup>(11)</sup> There was also the John Rylands Library (founded in 1898 and now part of the Manchester University Library) which housed some valuable collections. Various medical and educational charities ("*too numerous to be named*")<sup>(12)</sup> were also in evidence. John Dalton (1766-1844) of atomic theory fame, and J.P. Joule (1818-1889) discoverer of the mechanical equivalent of heat, are both commemorated by statues at the entrance to the City's Town Hall. Indeed, the City attracted many eminent visitors at various times such as (alphabetically listed for convenience): Bright; Dickens; Disraeli; Gladstone; Nansen; Palmerston; Parnell; Ruskin; Scott (R.F.); Shackleton; Earl of Shaftesbury; Stanley; Thackeray.<sup>(13)</sup>

The City, in Houghton's time, was also renowned for its music and theatre, features "*supported financially by its world-wide trade and*

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10. W.H. Brindley, op.cit. p.134.

11. F.A. Bruton, op.cit. p.256.

12. ibid. p.255.

13. ibid. p.261.

personally by many of the traders", a factor which "distinguished Manchester from the purely industrial towns".<sup>(14)</sup> In 1857 Hallé arrived from Paris and in due course founded the famous Hallé Orchestra and The Royal Manchester College of Music.<sup>(15)</sup> Sir Edward Elgar once spoke of Manchester as "the centre of musical England."<sup>(16)</sup> Much of the support came from the City's German population, particularly for its drama. Agate recalls that "Manchester was a city of liberal culture, awareness and gaiety, which it owed almost entirely to the large infusion of German-Jewish brains and taste."<sup>(17)</sup> The German society was indeed large, influential, public-spirited and cultured.<sup>(18)</sup>

Howard Spring (1889-1965) worked in Manchester for some fifteen years on The Manchester Guardian and provides an interesting comment:

*These were the most momentous years of my life. I came to know and to love Manchester as I have known and loved no other city. When I began to write books, it was natural and inevitable that Manchester should be their focus. I was steeped in the place to the eyebrows. I am still touchy with anyone who runs it down or fails to understand its enormous significance in the life of Britain. I am often referred to ... as a 'Manchester Man'.*<sup>(19)</sup>

The Manchester Guardian was in fact to be an indispensable part of Houghton's life (it will be discussed later).

Finally, it may be as well to mention here one other Manchester institution which was eventually to change women's lives in this

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14. D.Ayerst, Guardian : biography of a newspaper, Collins, 1971, p.339.

15. W.H.Brindley, op.cit. p.178.

16. F.A.Bruton, op.cit. p.176.

17. J.E.Agate, Ego, Hamish Hamilton, 1935, p.44.

18. D.Ayerst, op.cit. p.339.

19. H. Spring. The Autobiography of, Collins, 1972, p.129.

country (at least) and also to have some influence upon Houghton. In 1867 the first Society for Women's Suffrage was founded in Manchester.<sup>(20)</sup> Thirteen years later one of its renowned leaders, Christabel Pankhurst, was born at Old Trafford.<sup>(21)</sup> By the time she was twenty-five she had been imprisoned in Manchester for her political activities.<sup>(22)</sup> By 1908 the Women's Social and Political Union had eleven regional offices but its headquarters remained in the City.<sup>(23)</sup> Indeed, it inspired a whole series of satellite groups such as the Actresses' Franchise League with actor-manager J. Forbes-Robertson, his wife Gertrude Elliot, Ellen Terry, Mrs Langtry, the Vanbrugh sisters, Lewis Casson and Sybil Thorndike. It even encouraged suffrage plays e.g. How the Vote Was Won<sup>(1909)</sup> by Cicely Hamilton. The movement also had the sympathy of writers like Bennett, Masfield and Galsworthy,<sup>(24)</sup> The Manchester Guardian, Miss Horniman and Houghton.

It is to drama, however, that Manchester owes much of its cultural reputation, particularly after 1907, a date "*renowned in English theatre history for the establishment there of the first modern repertory company*".<sup>(25)</sup> Manchester's theatre history is impressive. It had its first theatre in 1753<sup>(26)</sup> with the Theatre Royal opening in 1775 "*to the dismay of many of its citizens, who thought they could not be*

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20. F.A.Bruton, op.cit. p.256.

21. D. Mitchell, Queen Christabel, op.cit. p.14.

22. ibid. p.1.

23. ibid. p.136.

24. D. Mitchell, op.cit. p.136.

25. O.C.T. p.615.

26. ibid. p.616.



*true Wesleyans without finding devils in the theatres.*"<sup>(27)</sup> Kemble, Macready and Forbes-Robertson were all reputed to have begun or thrived in Manchester. One name in particular, however, needs to be singled out: Irving. He spent six years apprenticeship at the Theatre Royal and was regarded as *"Manchester's favourite actor before London had heard of him"*.<sup>(28)</sup> In 1893 Beerbohm Tree arranged for Trilby to make its debut in Manchester<sup>(29)</sup> and in July 1905 Sarah Bernhardt played Pelléas to the Melisande of Mrs. Patrick Campbell (in French),<sup>(30)</sup> the latter having already been seen in The Second Mrs. Tanqueray in Manchester.<sup>(31)</sup>

By 1894 a private Independent Theatre Committee had been established in Manchester to arrange short seasons of the new 'revolutionary drama'.<sup>(32)</sup> For four years it staged Ibsen and Shaw at the Gentlemen's Concert Hall in Lower Mosley Street (demolished 1898), an enterprise of some advance: *"Ibsen's plays were staged here and listened to intelligently while the West End die-hards were still calling them 'an open drain ... morbid, unhealthy, disgusting'."*<sup>(33)</sup> In fact, in 1907 something momentous happened: Ibsen's Ghosts was presented for the first time in Manchester.<sup>(34)</sup> This was not, however, at a professional theatre but at the Athenaeum. Its staging was important

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27. W.H.Brindley, op.cit. p.184.

28. A.Bendle and J.Knowlson, 'Curtain Call: personal reminiscences and historical detail on the subject of The Manchester Theatres', unpublished, 1977, p.1. In Manchester Central Reference Library, Theatre Collection, ref. Th.792.094273 Be 1.

29. W.H.Brindley, op.cit. p.186.

30. The Manchester Guardian, 15 July 1905, p.9.

31. A.Bendle and J.Knowlson, op.cit. p.16.

32. W.H.Brindley, op.cit. p.186.

33. A.Bendle and J.Knowlson, op.cit. p.1. There is no indication that the plays were censored.

34. The Manchester Guardian, 18 Nov.1907, p.7.

for many reasons but these are not directly connected with this thesis and therefore its history in Manchester will be kept to the minimum.

The Chief Constable of Manchester had refused the building a licence to perform the play on previous occasions.<sup>(35)</sup> The arrangements were undertaken by James Agate and admission was by invitation only from a committee comprised of Miss Horniman, Beerbohm Tree, Professor Herford and Ben Iden Payne. Such was the demand to see it, however, that further arrangements had to be made to extend the play by four nights.<sup>(36)</sup> It would seem that the play was unexpurgated since some reports condemned it with warnings such as in The Manchester Programme:

*this drama should not be acted in any theatre to which both sexes ... could be admitted.*

This particularly lengthy review further proscribed the "dismal story" which had not "a single moral sentiment ... nor ... moral character."<sup>(37)</sup>

One of the distinguished critics of The Manchester Guardian C.E.Montague (see Ch.4), however, praised its production and commented on its ability to handle the delicate issues it raised.<sup>(38)</sup>

Interestingly enough another production was staged at the same time by The Manchester Independent Stage Society in the Co-operative Hall, Ardwick.<sup>(39)</sup> The presentation of the play was regarded by Agate as being indicative of a movement within the City:

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35. The Observer, 17 Oct.1907, H.C. Vol.A.

36. The Manchester Guardian, op.cit.

37. No.572, 25 Nov.1907, p.12.

38. op.cit.

39. The Manchester Programme, op.cit.

*There has been a stir within the theatre .... the Manchester playgoer feels that he is ridding himself of his dependence upon London 'successes' .... [with this] wealth of performances ... Manchester may, at least with as much justice as London, call herself [a] centre.* (40)

By 1900 Manchester had no fewer than sixteen professional theatres<sup>(41)</sup> which made the choice of entertainment wide: from Shakespeare to music hall, from grand opera to revue, from musical comedy to burlesque, from drama to circuses and from "Bernard Shaw to Gracie Fields."<sup>(42)</sup> By 1907 there were some sixty-four amateur dramatic societies in the City.<sup>(43)</sup> Such was the range and availability that Walter Greenwood was able to recollect the following anecdote. At the Hallé he met a young man:

*"Look" - he pulled the 'Manchester Guardian' [sic] from his pocket; it was open at the theatre advertisements page. "Quay St, Peter St, Oxford St .... Eight theatres in three streets, all number one dates - all on your door-step. I don't think you realise what you've got ... what I'd give to live here ..."* (44)

A similar view was also expressed by Howard Spring: "you seemed almost to be hemmed in by theatres. They spread from the centre out into the suburbs."<sup>(45)</sup>

Iden Payne singled out five Manchester Theatres for comment.<sup>(46)</sup> The Theatre Royal he regarded as the most prominent, attracting the leading

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40. The Manchester Guardian, 31 Dec.1907. Article entitled 'The Theatre in 1907' in H.C. Vol.A.

41. A.Bendle and J.Knowlson, op.cit. p.1.

42. *ibid.*

43. Manchester Evening Clarion, 3 Oct.1907, H.C. Vol.A.

44. Walter Greenwood, There was a time, Cape, 1967, p.125.

45. H.Spring, Three Plays, Collins, 1953, p.7.

46. A Life in a Wooden O, op.cit. p.4.

London actor-managers. It was in fact the third building of that name (the previous two being on different sites) built in 1845 and located in Peter Street. Irving had joined it in 1860 and many great names appeared there including Gertrude Elliott; J.Martin Harvey; Julia Neilson; J. Forbes-Robertson; Fred Terry.<sup>(47)</sup> It was also recognised as the home of opera in the City, giving, for example, the first performance in England (in English) of Puccini's La Boheme (22 April 1897) with Puccini present. Second came the Prince's Theatre (1864) on Oxford Road (later to feature some of Houghton's work). During its first decade it was the scene of Charles Calvert's Shakesperean productions and later the Vedrenne-Barker Company played there. It eventually became the home of musical comedy before its demolition in 1940 to make way for a cinema which in the event was not built. Third came the Comedy Theatre (1884), also on Peter Street. It had slightly less status (notes Payne) but was still respectable. Incidentally, this was the theatre which Miss Horniman was shortly to buy giving it a 'new' name - The Gaiety. The 'new' name was that of the original building which had stood on the same spot in 1878 but which was burned down in 1883. The fourth was the Queen's Theatre (1870) on Bridge Street. It too staged Houghton's plays before its closure in 1911. Payne notes that ~~it~~ was known as the "*blood-tub*" because of its dedication to melodrama. The fifth was the St. James in Oxford Street (1884-1908) which Payne notes "*subsisted on a mixture of lesser attractions.*"

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47. The Society for Theatre Research, Two Hundred Years of Theatre in Manchester, 1952, p.4. All facts above are taken from here unless otherwise indicated. Located in Manchester Central Reference Library, Theatre Collection, ref. QR 792.094273 S1.

For Houghton the above theatres had several attractions, not the least being inspiration. On his visits to them, whether as a paying member of the audience or as a critic for The Manchester Guardian, he saw a vast range not only in type but also in quality (see Ch.4). For example the early part of the century saw Manchester offering Shakespeare, toured by actor-managers like Benson; the musicals of George Edwardes, Courtneidge and Seymour Hicks; and melodramas written in the 1890's or earlier. The Theatre Royal in particular, between 1900-1910, offered 70 Shakespeare productions, 20 musical comedies and 150 melodramas, comedies and farces whilst the Prince's Theatre offered 100 weeks of musical comedy with 11 Shakespeare productions and 100 melodramas and comedies.<sup>(48)</sup> To see Houghton's early attempts as melodramas (Ch.2) then is not surprising. However, as Bendle and Knowlson (and indeed Houghton) point out there were also many quality plays and productions as well.<sup>(49)</sup>

It was to such an environment that Iden Payne and Miss Horniman were attracted in mid 1907. They saw in the City a gap in all that it had to offer theatrically. More importantly, they also believed that such a gap could not only be filled by them but also supported by the people of the City: a commercial and artistic proposition was viable. The whole event was set in motion by Payne who on 9 July 1907 sent the following (now historical) letter to the editor of a renowned paper - The Manchester Guardian. It warrants being quoted in full:

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48. A.Bendle and J.Knowlson, op.cit. p.15.

49. ibid. p.16. See also my Ch.4. and Appendix 4.

Sir,

I am writing to inform you of a scheme which it is possible may form the nucleus of a city theatre, the idea of which, I am informed, has been mooted recently in Manchester. Miss A.E.F. Horniman, with myself as her general manager, hopes to form a repertory in Manchester, and we shall commence our work in the coming autumn with a series of productions, probably at the Midland Hotel Theatre. This, however, will only be a beginning, and we hope in time to have our own theatre.

We have, tentatively given the name of the Manchester Playgoers' Theatre to our work, and we intend to produce no plays which are not sincere works of art. We shall seek to produce good new plays, to revive old masterpieces, and to present translations of the best works of foreign authors. We have chosen Manchester because we feel that of all towns it is the one most ready for such an undertaking, and that there, if anywhere, there will be the support necessary for the success of our scheme. I hope very shortly to give much fuller particulars.

Yours,

B. Iden Payne.

20 Leyland Road, Lee, London, S.E. July 9.<sup>(50)</sup>

The press was filled with the topic for months: indeed for the next ten or so years. The very next day W.A.Brabner of the Athenaeum (see Ch.1. fn.104) replied:

*The projected formation of a repertory company by Miss Horniman is an epoch-making event in the history of drama in Manchester ... it is tangible proof of the high regard in which our audiences are held as intelligent, appreciative and responsive to good dramatic work.* <sup>(51)</sup>

Allan Monkhouse, The Manchester Guardian's chief drama critic, warmed to the idea immediately. His very words were prophetic:

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50. 11 July 1907, p.4.

51. The Manchester Guardian, 12 July 1907, H.C. Vol.A.

*Who knows whether we may not even develop our own school of dramatists? We must not imitate the Celtic temper nor Mr. Shaw's paradoxes, but tragedy and comedy may be found in Lancashire life ... and we have men here who can observe it and might dramatise it. We may find encouragement to look more at life and less at the plays that have gone before ... without any quarrel with the existing theatres which have done what they could in their way, we feel that in some form there is need for it.* (52)

The Manchester Courier's response was even more apposite. If one recalls the references to Houghton's powers of perception and the Ernest Marriott caricature (p.33 supra) then the following becomes pertinent:

*If we had Röntgen-ray eyes, and could peep through the walls of houses, what dramas we should see! - what comedies, what tragedies, what pitiful farces!* (53)

Moreover, the same paper also saw "a school of dramatists" which would consist of "men who can build a play without bringing in battles, murder and sudden death ... refuse to deal in conventional platitudes" and who could put on stage "men and women of real daily life who ... fight and struggle through the mental and moral conflict that constitutes the active, intellectual life of our present day." Such comments had followed on from the success gained by Miss Horniman's first production David Ballard by Charles McEvoy. (54) Indeed, the Manchester Evening News lamented that perhaps there were other gifted playwrights who were being neglected. (55) The press comments were almost recipes for success or looked at another way summaries of Houghton's untested talents. However, it was not until 26 October

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52. M. G., 25 July 1907.

53. 24 Sept. 1907, H.C. Vol.A.

54. Pogson, p.30.

55. 24 Sept.1907, H.C. Vol.A.

1907 that the playwright was finally stirred. In an interview Miss Horniman stated that of all the things she hoped to do one was:

*"to encourage young English playwrights", and she pledged that if playwrights sent her their plays she would read them through herself.*

But she did add a relevant proviso:

*Let them write ... not ... about ... society existing in imagination, but about ... real life. (56)*

Houghton needed no more encouragement:

*When Miss Horniman started her company at the Manchester Gaiety I saw there was a chance of such work as I cared to write being produced. (57)*

Annie Elizabeth Fredericka Horniman (1860-1937) was a formidable lady.

There is no doubt that Houghton owed her much and the point will be expanded upon in Chapter 8. Although a biography of her does exist

(Rex Pogson, Miss Horniman and the Gaiety Theatre, Manchester,

Rockliff, 1952) and another one is being prepared,<sup>(58)</sup> a few comments about her at this point would be particularly relevant. St. John

Ervine notes that she did much to hinder potential biographers by

destroying *"nearly all the letters she received"*.<sup>(59)</sup> Fortunately,

however, she did keep some, including several from Stanley Houghton.<sup>(60)</sup>

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56. Daily Dispatch, 26 Oct. 1907, H.C. Vol.A.

57. Manchester Courier, 20 July 1912, p.7.

58. By Dr.J.Cogdill of Fredonia State University College, New York. He informed me by letter (Oct.1981) that Pogson's book was often erroneous.

59. In the Foreword to Pogson, p.vi.

60. Originally kept by her cousin Dr. Margery Garrod but on whose death in 1981 went to her daughter Mrs. Elizabeth Cade of E. Sussex. Mrs. Cade supplied me with typed copies of the letters. Others, however, are to be found in the Allan Monkhouse Collection and the Basil Dean Collection at the John Rylands University of Manchester Library, (Deansgate), and also in the Theatre Collection of Manchester Central Reference Library.



She also took a great pride in the Gaiety and collected newspaper clippings from all over the world in connection with the company. The total must be nearly 10,000 in seventeen volumes. (61)

Miss Horniman, as she was always called, was a very determined, individual lady renowned for her 'rebel' views and actions. In 1893 she inherited a substantial legacy from her grandfather of the famous tea family. (62) She certainly knew what she wanted to do with her new found wealth. She had, on several occasions travelled (and cycled) through Europe and had a particular liking for the German theatre, especially the subsidized repertory theatre and the way it was treated as an integral part of daily life. Indeed, a letter to a friend of hers in 1928 (part of which Pogson quotes) reveals a much more pertinent observation (it is about the Ibsen Centenary):

*In 1889 ... I first heard one of his plays, An Enemy of the People & was much impressed. In 1890 I heard several in German in Munich & had the pleasure of being at the very first performance of Hedda Gabbler & saw Ibsen called on to the stage afterwards. I also saw him bow from the Dress Circle there, at a revival of The Vikings of Helgeland.* (63)

The letter continues to urge the correspondent to read Ibsen and Shaw's commentary on him, lamenting that the performances in the provinces have been so bad that his reputation has been "injured seriously". Such a letter is significant since it highlights her desire for reality as she defined it in her plea to writers for the Gaiety (mentioned earlier), and also helps explain her high regard for Houghton (which will become evident later).

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61. Kept at the John Rylands University Library above.

62. Pogson, p.8.

63. Letter from Miss Horniman to Tom Bass (an unidentified friend in Manchester) dated 12 April 1928, Theatre Collection, Manchester Central Reference Library ref.Ho.1.

With some of her inheritance she secretly backed the production of an unknown author<sup>(64)</sup> at the Avenue Theatre run by Florence Farr in April 1894. The play was Arms and the Man and it was Shaw's first publicly performed play. From there she went, in 1903, to Dublin where she built and equipped the Abbey Theatre at a cost of £13,000<sup>(65)</sup> (£390,000 in 1981). The differences which arose between her and Lady Gregory and others do not concern us here save to say that evidence did come to light in 1955 to refute some of the damning evidence held against her by the Abbey.<sup>(66)</sup> What does concern us is that coupled with her experiences of Germany and her actual involvement with a theatre like the Abbey, it is perhaps not surprising that she should come to Manchester and ask for the types of plays she did.

Despite all that Miss Horniman had to offer there is probably no doubt that without one man in particular she may never have achieved what she set out to do: Ben Iden Payne was directly involved with establishing repertory in Manchester. Indeed, his daughter Lady Wolfit (Sir Donald's widow) maintains that he was solely responsible.<sup>(67)</sup> Payne's father had been Minister of the Strangeway's Unitarian Chapel, Manchester,<sup>(68)</sup> and Payne had, as mentioned, been at Manchester Grammar School (MGS) (although born at Newcastle-upon-Tyne,

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64. Pogson, p.8. Collaborated by O.C.T. p.450.

65. O.C.T. ibid.

66. In Feb. 1955 at Rusholme Cinema, Manchester (formerly a theatre) a panel dated Dec. 1910 was found with fifteen authenticated signatures, thirteen of which were by leading Abbey actors thanking her for her help. Now in the Theatre Collection, Manchester Central Reference Library, ref. Ho 18.

67. Interview kindly given to me by Lady Wolfit in her home, October 1981.

68. Pogson, p.25.

1881).<sup>(69)</sup> He acquired his first job with Frank Benson's Company in 1898, a job he obtained by reciting a speech he had twice used to win MGS's elocutionary prize. When he was twenty-five, he toured Ireland. He recalls that in Waterford, during an off-stage period a gentleman called momentarily to arrange a meeting with him:

*The gentleman turned out to be a tall, dark man who looked ... so like a priest .... He introduced himself by saying, "My name is Yeats". Naively I blurted out, "Not the poet?" "Yes", he replied gravely, "I am William Butler Yeats. I suppose you might call me a poet".* (70)

In fact Yeats had made a special journey from Dublin to see Payne on a recommendation from Granville-Barker. By 1907 Payne had become the director of the Abbey but shortly afterwards was offered full charge of a new venture from Miss Horniman with a capital backing of £25,000<sup>(71)</sup> [£725,000 in 1981]:

*I saw this stroke of fortune as a step toward creating the kind of theatre that I had longed for but never found. My reading of Ibsen and Shaw ... had made me eager for a chance to experience, and to help advance, the New Drama.* (72)

Like Miss Horniman, he too was a determined individualist and was to do much for repertory drama, particularly with his methods of ensemble acting and enunciation - aspects that Houghton relied upon for his own dramatic success. Of Payne's dress Arnold Bennett was to comment that he looked like "a little original wild member of the Fabian Society. Cape instead of overcoat, held on by bands crossing the chest", but nonetheless, "highly intelligent" though "self-centred".<sup>(73)</sup>

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69. A Life in a Wooden O, op.cit. p.xii.

70. *ibid.* p.65.

71. *ibid.* p.78.

72. *ibid.* p.79.

73. F. Swinnerton (Ed), The Journals of Arnold Bennett, Penguin, 1954, p.203.

It would seem then that by early 1908 conditions were auspicious: the time was ripe for Houghton to make his first serious attempt at professional playwriting. He had just read a Guy De Maupassant short story entitled En Famille, written in the year of Houghton's birth. Approximately 9,000 words, it tells the story of an old mother believed to be dead by the family but who in fact was not; she had fallen and knocked herself unconscious and attempts to revive her had failed. She was pronounced dead by the doctor friend of the family (the doctor's incompetence is made clear prior to this event). No will had been made and it is therefore considered essential that the adult son who had looked after the mother for some ten years send for his adult sister to discuss the matter. Prior to her arrival the son's wife insisted that they take a clock and a marble-top dressing table as they think the sister will never believe that the mother had once 'given' them to her brother. On arrival the whole scene becomes one of simulated grief and a discussion about inheritance. The daughter of the host family on being sent upstairs to bring down some candles returned horrified, announcing that grandmother was getting dressed. The grandmother meanwhile was a little puzzled by the absence of her dressing table. Hypocritical delight was expressed by the son's wife at the 'miracle' but this was punctured by grandma's request for her dinner. The incident then centred on the surreptitious replacing of the items, family bitterness at the 'stealing' and it was capped with grandma's announcement that she would leave her son's house and move in with her daughter. The story was certainly anecdotal with its success being almost entirely due to its dialogue.<sup>(74)</sup>

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74. E.D. Sullivan, Maupassant: The Short Story, Arnold, 1966, (2nd edn.).

Houghton quickly realised the plot's potential for the theatre:

*it immediately occurred to me that here was an idea that might very well be exploited on the stage. So I used the idea, creating my own set of characters, and, of course, writing my own dialogue. I called it The Dear Departed.* (75)

Between April and May of 1908 he wrote this one-act play.<sup>(76)</sup> The original script, however, proved to be too long for a curtain raiser (some forty-five minutes)<sup>(77)</sup> and it had to be re-shaped, according to Brighouse, "*under strong managerial guidance*".<sup>(78)</sup> Fortunately a copy of both versions exists.<sup>(79)</sup> The changes are modest but the affect is noticeable. For example, where the published version ends the original continues for some thirteen lines and involves the four characters despairing at having actually forfeited their inheritance. It also permits the arrival of the doctor. The part in the play where Victoria is sent upstairs to search granfather's pockets for the receipt for his life insurance premium is extended into a reference about the Suffragettes for some six lines. The revised version merely sends her upstairs for the keys to the bureau. She then returns to announce that grandpa's "*getting up*". When Abel does appear downstairs the conversation about why he was presumed 'dead' in the first place is omitted in the published version. This involves some eight lines of dialogue and stage direction. Whether these changes were

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75. Manchester Courier, 20 July 1912, p.7.

76. Introduction, p.xli.

77. *ibid.*

78. *ibid.*

79. These are probably prompt copies belonging to Miss Horniman. They are to be found in an unlabelled bundle in the Library of the British Theatre Association, 9 Fitzroy Sq., London: One copy of The Fifth Commandment, Hindle Wakes, The Master of the House, The Younger Generation and The Unemployed (the original title of Independent Means (see p. 81 *infra*)).

at Houghton's instigation or the management's "*pruning*" is not clear. The outcome, however, is a technically superior play permitting maximum comedy, particularly with the omission of the Suffragette reference.

Out of the forty or so scripts Miss Horniman received weekly<sup>(80)</sup> she selected The Dear Departed for production and scheduled it for 2 November 1908 as a curtain-raiser to Shaw's Widowers' Houses.<sup>(81)</sup> The application to the Lord Chamberlain for licence is interesting for two reasons. One is the absence of the Examiner of Plays' review (see p.xvi) and the other is that the copy of the play submitted to him has, tentatively, the names of actors and actresses pencilled in alongside the characters' names.<sup>(82)</sup> The play was well received by the Gaiety audience. At its first production Houghton was called for but refused to go on until Miss Horniman threatened him:

*Look here, Mr. Houghton, if you don't go on, I will  
lead you on and then Manchester will laugh.*<sup>(83)</sup>

The play became a favourite at the Gaiety and was acted for a total of six weeks between 1908-14.<sup>(84)</sup>

The play was also a success in London, a point of importance: it whetted Houghton's taste for metropolitan success. It was included in a repertoire to be played for two weeks<sup>(85)</sup> (but extended to three

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80. Pogson, p.37.

81. *ibid.* p.58.

82. L.C.P. Vol.23, No.88. Mrs. Slater: Thorndyke; Holbrook; Mrs. Jordan: King; Henry Slater: Austin; Ben Jordan: Bibby; Landor: Victoria Slater; Rooke: Abel Merryweather; Landor: Casson. On the night the characters were played as follows: Mrs. S: King; Mrs. J: Holbrook; HS: Austin; BJ: Keogh; VS: Meek; AM: Landor. (see The Works, Vol.3, p.307).

83. Pogson, p.59.

84. *ibid.* pp.199-207.

85. *ibid.* p.69.

because of continued success) at The Coronet theatre, Notting Hill, beginning 7 June 1909.<sup>(86)</sup> The opening night was a sell-out with distinguished guests in the audience: The Dear Departed preceded Widowers' Houses,

*before a very large audience. Every seat was occupied and every one seemed pleased [including] Shaw who occupied a box and beamed approval [and] Ellen Terry, who occupied the opposite box.* (87)

The Times was impressed:

*It is the habit of the provinces in matters theatrical to gulp London fare, and it is quite unusual for us to be visited by a company radiating from a provincial city. Miss Horniman's company occupies a somewhat unique position.* (88)

Shaw's approval may well have been for his own play that night but that would be unfair: "Mr. Shaw beamed approval upon a curtain-raiser entitled The Dear Departed",<sup>(89)</sup> at a later showing. Indeed, Ellen Terry, at yet another performance "occupied a box and was deeply interested in the presentation of ... The Dear Departed". This report concludes that appreciation was "as much ... in London as in Manchester", and indeed "no more striking enthusiasm has been shown in London for some time".<sup>(90)</sup> Perhaps the real appreciation of any true worth came from William Archer (1856-1924) whom H.G. Wells labelled a man of "unscrupulous integrity."<sup>(91)</sup> A critic of renown in London, Archer had translated Ibsen in the 1890's and introduced him to the Metropolis. A very close friend of Shaw's, he did much to encourage the 'new drama',

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86. A.Nicoll, English Drama 1900-1930, op.cit. p.734. This was to be the first of several seasons spent in London by the Gaiety Co. It also played independently of the Gaiety at London's Criterion Theatre between May 1913-Feb.1914 (see Introduction, pxlii).

87. The Pall Mall Gazette, 8 June 1909, H.C. Vol.C.

88. 8 June 1909. H.C. Vol.C.

89. The Referee, 13 June 1909, ibid.

90. Manchester Weekly Chronicle, 2 July 1909, H.C. Vol.D.

91. O.C.T. p.32.

Indeed, it was he who suggested to Shaw that they should collaborate in the writing of a play: Archer to do the plot and Shaw the dialogue. The result (ultimately) was Widowers' Houses. Of the above occasion, however, he wrote:

*This Manchester movement is the most important fact in our theatrical history since the opening of the Vedrenne-Barker campaign at the Court Theatre.*

More importantly though he noted that Houghton's play was,

*a rather cynical but remarkably well-written low-life comedy [with] two rapacious sisters, a Goneril and Regan of the Slums.* (92)

The play also attracted overseas interest and led to Houghton's first ever contract outside the United Kingdom. On 1 July 1909 a Miss Hilda England of New York acquired the rights to produce it not only in the U.S.A. but also in Norway, Sweden and Denmark for a period of three years. What must have pleased Houghton was not just the royalties (\$25 for each full week "on the Vaudeville or Music Hall Stage" and \$3 for each performance as a curtain raiser)<sup>(93)</sup> but the fact that it was to be staged in America - a venue that was to attract him more and more in the future.

Houghton's view of its success in 1912 was understated: "I think I may not unjustly say that it attracted considerable attention".

(Manchester Courier, 20 July, p.7). Its future successes would probably have amazed him. Tinsley Pratt<sup>(94)</sup> in 1914 made such a prediction when

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92. The Nation, 3 July 1909, H.C. Vol.D.

93. Contract now in the Stanley Houghton Collection.

94. Editor of The Manchester Quarterly, an illustrated journal of literature and art published by Sherratt and Hughes. He was also a member of the 'Swan Club' (see p.15 infra) and eventually took over the librarianship of the Portico Library, Manchester from Ernest Marriott (see Ch.2. fn.3.) on 4 July 1912 (see Proceedings of the Committee: Portico Library, April 1909-Jan. 1936, p.54, located at the Portico Library, Mosley St, Manchester).



he wrote that "*the present writer will not be surprised if it [The Dear Departed] is still played when much of Houghton's more ambitious work is forgotten.*"<sup>(95)</sup> And that is the case. It is in fact the only play of Houghton's still in print (Samuel French). Moreover, despite the fact that its copyright expired on 31 December 1963, royalties still arrive at French's London Office (author No. 95031).<sup>(96)</sup>

The play was also to be Houghton's first published work.<sup>(97)</sup> It was later published in a collection of other one-act plays by Houghton<sup>(98)</sup> as well as being translated into French, Welsh and Scottish,<sup>(99)</sup> and acted in translation in Holland.<sup>(100)</sup> The B.B.C. broadcasted it on the radio three times between 1950 and 1959.<sup>(101)</sup>

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95. The Manchester Dramatists, Sherratt and Hughes, 1914, p.216.
96. On 30 April 1963 Houghton's executor was notified by French that under the Berne Copyright Convention all rights to royalties would cease as from the year end. The firm lamented that it was "*indeed extremely unfortunate for you that Stanley Houghton died so young.*" However, on 13 May 1963 a further letter not only informed the executor that the play had copyright in the U.S.A. from 28 April 1910 and only expired on 28 April 1966, but also that new laws were being formulated in the U.S.A. which added a further three years to its royalty life. Both letters are in the Stanley Houghton Collection. Despite this extension royalties have never ceased coming in since 1908 and the present executor still receives monthly royalties from the U.S.A. and Canada and parts of the U.K. These receipts are still in the possession of Mrs. Caw, the playwright's niece-in-law.
97. Samuel French Ltd, 1910. A first edition is to be found in the Stanley Houghton Collection.
98. Five One-Act Plays, French, 1913: The Dear Departed; Fancy Free; The Master of the House; Phipps; The Fifth Commandment.
99. Respectively Defunt Merry, Traduction francaise de Louise Pennequin, Librairie Paul Rosier, Paris, 1911, with the Slaters becoming Warder, Victoria becoming Ellen and Ben Jordan becoming James Jordan; Yr. Ymadawedig, R.Ellis Jones, London, 1929; and Scottish 'Twixt Cup and Lip, a version in Scots by Felix Fair of The Dear Departed by Stanley Houghton, French, 1937, with the Slaters becoming Morton - Henry to Harry, Mrs. Slater to Mary, Victoria to Jeannie - the Jordans becoming Johnston - Mrs. Jordan to Lizzie, Ben to Bob - and Abel Merryweather became Adam Fleming.
100. Introduction, p.xlii.
101. Radio Times, i.e. 12 Oct. 1950; 11 Sept. 1958; 26 Nov. 1959.

Its publication gave Houghton no end of satisfaction as seen from a letter to A.N. Monkhouse on 22 April 1910:

*If you're not sick of it, I should like to send you a copy of my first published work. I think I can promise that you won't hear any more of it in future, but I should like to think that it reposes on your bookshelves with your Ibsens, your Galsworthys, and your Shaws. The illustrations inside each cover have nothing to do with the play, but I designed the sort of map on page 6 myself. But when I look again at it I don't see how Mr. & Mrs. Slater are going to get grandfather's bureau into the room without moving the hatstand.*

*I've sent Montague one; perhaps he'll send me a 'Hind Let Loose' [a novel written by Montague] and a Volume of Critical Essays. From one author to another ... [sic] these little courtesies. I tell you this because I've already got your novels, so I am not fishing. (102)*

In view of the aforementioned facts the second sentence of the above letter is indeed ironic.

It was perhaps fitting that<sup>st</sup> the demise of the Gaiety some of its final weeks should be given over to Houghton. Its programme for the very last week was Hindle Wakes preceded by The Dear Departed:

*Houghton's father and mother [were] in the audience .... [which was] large. There was not a seat to spare in the popular parts, and the gallery people were standing. The company were called for again and again. (103)*

Concluding the account of this play it may be worth mentioning Houghton's unintended dramatic irony. In the story En Famille an incompetent doctor plays a significant part whereas in The Dear Departed the doctor is only mentioned in passing without any comment upon his professionalism save to say,

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102. A.N.M. 10.

103. The Manchester Guardian, 30 May 1920, H.C. Vol.Q.

Mrs. Slater: *Pringle attended him when he was alive  
and Pringle shall attend him when he's  
dead. That's professional etiquette.*  
(The Works, Vol.3., p.36.)

Dr. John Pringle was in fact the name of the Houghton family doctor  
who attended Houghton in his final months and signed his death  
certificate.<sup>(104)</sup>

Here then was the beginning of Houghton's professional breakthrough.  
Yet the success was more than might at first appear. Few critics  
realised the depth of skill involved in the play. The title itself  
was a stock phrase. For example it had been used in 1890 for an  
operetta.<sup>(105)</sup> More important though was the theme, the  
highlighting of bogus emotion,<sup>which</sup> was not new to literature. Consequently  
writers could expose themselves to the charge of either plagiarism or  
undue influence. Houghton was very careful to acknowledge his debt  
to De Maupassant<sup>(106)</sup> and as such was rarely chastised. However, it  
was left to one critic in particular to highlight this whole concept.  
C.E. Montague of The Manchester Guardian noted that:

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104. Death Certificate No.193, Didsbury, 12 Dec. 1913 (see Ch.12).  
Mrs.Caw recollects him as the family friend as well as doctor.  
Houghton's mother named him as executor of her will on  
12 March 1928: "John Pringle (friend)". In Calendar of the  
Grants op.cit. 1930, p.284, Pringle is designated "surgeon".  
Shortly after Houghton's death the family moved to 191  
Withington Rd, Whalley Range; Dr. Pringle lived at No. 153.
105. The Era, 12 June 1909, H.C. Vol.C.
106. See Gaiety programmes for The Dear Departed in Manchester Central  
Reference Library, Theatre Collection.

*These things are a kind of dramatic common or open space. Every dramatist, new and old, has equal rights over them. What matters is the way the rights are used. And Mr. Houghton, in using them, shows a pretty turn of observation, a fresh, quick relish for the harsh humours of the situation, and also a capital sense of theatrical values in such cases as the comic effect of the daughter and son-in-law visibly struggling with the supposed dead man's furniture .... with the young girl's remarks .... promptly cutting through the whole web of adult sophistry. (107)*

The Manchester Evening News put it more simply:

*the author's modest admission of indebtedness thereto is cancelled by that freshness of treatment, characterisation and setting .... cleverly revealed in the dialogue. (108)*

In other words what Houghton was exhibiting, besides his powers of dialogue and stage craftsmanship, was his ability to look at things anew, to deal with the commonplace in such a way as to give it a new lease of life. Some twenty years later, Montague, in his analysis of the art of writing noted something of relevance here and whilst there is no indication that he particularly had Houghton in mind, he may well have included in his thoughts the above review of his of

The Dear Departed:

*Where ... an artist differs most widely from the common run of men and women is in his power of inducing that exceptional condition in himself and of working it up to a pitch that for the rest of us is quite unattainable. For most of the time he may .... cut no figure at all among the wits and sages .... But with a pen in his hand, he can 'have a devil' at will .... It is seldom that a great artist has anything new to say about life. The things that touch or amuse him are usually those by which the greatest number of ordinary people were touched and amused before him ... the theme would be commonplace. But when the great ... writer had brooded upon it, then it would have gained the charm of a new and extraordinary intensity ... of perception and emotion. (109)*

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107. 3 Nov. 1908. H.C. Vol.B.

108. 9 Nov. 1908. *ibid.*

109. A typescript entitled 'A Writer's Notes on his Trade', 1930, in the Montague Collection, John Rylands University of Manchester Library (Deansgate).

This was indeed now to be Houghton's hallmark: a fresh, but humorous look at the everyday.

Fortunately a piece of evidence is to hand which gives credence to this viewpoint. Reviewing a play on behalf of The Manchester Guardian in October 1910, Houghton wrote that whilst "*the tracing of influences is a pedantic and ungrateful pursuit*" he nonetheless saw merit in the actual art of re-using themes. After all, "*if Shakespere [sic] might adapt ... plots*" or indeed "*if Gaiety authors may lift themes from De Maupassant*", surely, he argues, one is "*permitted to borrow an idea ... especially [if] treated ... quite afresh.*"<sup>(110)</sup>

The acceptance of The Dear Departed by Miss Horniman encouraged Houghton to write his next play even before The Dear Departed was staged. It was to be his first professional full length play, a four act comedy written between October and December 1908.<sup>(111)</sup> By the time he had finished it The Dear Departed had established itself in Manchester and Houghton must have handed the new play over to Payne almost immediately. It did not, however, adhere entirely to the formula of his previous play.

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110. 4 Oct. 1910, p.7. He was reviewing Sir Walter Raleigh (1909, W. Devereux) at The Prince's Theatre, Manchester.

111. Introduction, p.xlii.

The copy lodged with the Lord Chamberlain's Plays carries in pencil the names of the intended actors and actresses although two alterations were made for the actual production.<sup>(112)</sup> The character of Edgar Forsyth was to be played by a man who was later to become renowned in the theatre and film world and was also to be a close friend of Houghton's - Basil Dean (see Ch.8.). The play was scheduled for 30 August 1909, a very important date because it was the opening night of the Gaiety's second season and therefore must be taken as a sign of both Miss Horniman's and Payne's faith in Houghton. Interestingly, the copy lodged with the Lord Chamberlain for licensing purposes does not carry a title save "*An up-to-date family drama in four Acts by Stanley Houghton*", yet the actual licence attached to it does - Independent Means.<sup>(113)</sup> However, because of the existence of another copy of the play it is now possible to explain this. The other copy<sup>(114)</sup> has the title The Unemployed and interestingly the curtain-raiser chosen to open with Houghton's play was entitled Unemployed (1909, Margaret M. Mack).<sup>(115)</sup>

The Daily Dispatch of 12 August 1909<sup>(116)</sup> carried a preview of the new season and declared that "*Stanley Houghton, author of The Dear Departed*" would in fact open it. The first night apparently went well before

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112. Originally John Craven Forsyth was to be played by Esmé Percy and Samuel Ritchie by Charles Bibby. In the event it was Charles Bibby and Henry Austin respectively. The rest remained as in The Works, Vol.3. p.307.
113. L.C.P. Vol.18, No.88. (This number was also the one given to The Dear Departed). There is no Examiner of Plays' review (see p.xvi).
114. One of the six acting copies in the unlabelled bundle in the library of the British Theatre Assoc. op.cit. (see fn. 79).
115. Pogson erroneously lists this one-act play as a first production (p.200) but see A.Nicoll, English Drama 1900-1930, op.cit. p.802.
116. H.C. Vol.D. Similar articles are to be found in Umpire, 15 Aug. 1909, and Manchester Evening News, 28 Aug.

"a wondrously appreciative audience"<sup>(117)</sup> with Houghton being called "repeatedly at its close."<sup>(118)</sup> The critics were keen to highlight the play's contemporaneity:

*Mr. Houghton is slap-bang up-to-date and allusions to Shaw, Ibsen, Socialism, the Women's Suffrage Movement, the revolt of the New Woman against the conventions which shackle and emesh her ... show that he is 'en rapport' with all the very latest topics and ideas of the day.* (119)

George Mair welcomed Houghton's ability to capitalise on his previous success: he now "showed an understanding of his audience" a skill which "would do credit to many older dramatists".<sup>(120)</sup> However, the play's technique was almost totally ignored by the critics. Because the play contained political and sociological issues it was judged on those criteria alone: "a small bundle of sociological pamphlets done up as comedy";<sup>(121)</sup> "a young woman of advanced ideas who can spit fire as effectively as if George Bernard Shaw had had a hand in her making ... [with] speeches ... extracted from political pamphlets";<sup>(122)</sup> "tracts in the form of dramas."<sup>(123)</sup> As such Houghton's design was missed. It was left to Dixon Scott<sup>(124)</sup> to note that:

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117. Manchester Courier, 30 Aug. 1909, H.C. Vol.D.

118. The Manchester Guardian, 30 Aug. 1909, *ibid.* Article by G.H.Mair.

119. Manchester Courier, *op.cit.*

120. The Manchester Guardian, *op.cit.* Houghton must have read the review because Mair informed Basil Dean that Houghton had complained to him about omitting a reference to Dean's performance in the play (letter dated 3 Sept. 1909 in Dean Collection, John Rylands University of Manchester Library, (Deansgate)). Mair married J.M.Synge's widow after an engagement performed at J.E. Agate's cottage (see D.Ayerst, Guardian, *op.cit.* p.330). Houghton was later to be compared with Synge (see p.270 *infra*).

121. Daily Dispatch, 31 Aug. 1909, H.C. Vol.D.

122. Manchester Evening Chronicle, 31 Aug. 1909, *ibid.*

123. Manchester City News, 3 Sept. 1909, *ibid.*

124. An important figure in this thesis. See Ch.4.

*These plays [Independent Means and Marriages in the Making] were the result of a close study of character - but not of the characters they contain. His gifts of insight and observation were being used to estimate sympathetically the attitude and expectations of his little private 'house'. He had not the smallest intention of holding the mirror up to nature. But his genius made it impossible for him to write even a claptrap comediotta without turning it into a perfect reflection of his audience, a faithful response to their senses, simple, artless, humorous. He gave them exactly what they wanted, provided all the proper thrills. He was a realist only in the sense that he thoroughly realized the situation. (125)*

In other words: "Houghton showed his knowledge of human nature ... by misrepresenting it." (ibid.) He located the action firmly within the theatrical, relying on what Scott called "all the old tricks" such as "the approved coups and curtains" and "piling up the glooms gleefully." This probably accounts for Brighouse's view of the play as "a work not wholly satisfactory, showing as it proceeds a sort of galloping consumption of tissue and a reliance upon technique to pull matters through." (126) Indeed, for Brighouse the play represents no more than Houghton "expressing in drama, though still fumblingly, the results of his inspired observation of suburban life" with the techniques of the play taking over with adverse results. (127) Indeed, Houghton, in what was perhaps his first 'professional' interview, commented sparingly (not wanting to say much about the play) that

*there has been a disposition in some quarters to blame me for making my play amusing .... When I told Miss Horniman she said that she was very much obliged to me, and she is positively delighted because some of the critics say that Independent Means is not exactly the sort of thing they expect to see at the Gaiety. (128)*

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125. Men of Letters, Hodder and Stoughton, 1916, pp.167-169.

126. Introduction, p.xlii.

127. ibid.

128. Manchester Evening Chronicle, 6 Sept. 1909, H.C. Vol.D.



By "*amusing*" he meant the techniques employed in the play, the "*misrepresenting*" of Scott's above. Thus the qualities of humour, wit, repartee and what one critic called "*natural, scintillating, and epigrammatic dialogue*",<sup>(129)</sup> were either misjudged or ignored altogether. It was only when the play was staged again (on 23 September 1909) at the Gaiety that one paper at least began to acknowledge Houghton's original intention of "*treating of no complex social problem*" or "*shocking no accepted views on morality*" but rather telling "*simply and straightforwardly [a] tale*".<sup>(130)</sup> Nonetheless the damage as such had been done and Houghton, other than perhaps gaining vital training in the art of the professional long play, remained discontented:

*I don't mind at all telling you that I regard this  
as the weakest play I have ever written.*<sup>(131)</sup>

The play did, however, remain popular. It not only opened the 1910 season at the Gaiety<sup>(132)</sup> but appeared again in 1911 with the curtain-raiser Lonesome-Like by his friend Brighouse, and finally in July 1914 with his own one-act play The Fifth Commandment.<sup>(133)</sup> On 3 November 1960 Granada Television transmitted it as part of a tribute celebrating the Horniman era.<sup>(134)</sup> Samuel French Ltd. published it in 1911.

Following the first performance of Independent Means on 30 August 1909 Houghton was granted the privilege of dinner at a special club of some

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129. Manchester Weekly News, 4 Sept. 1909, H.C. Vol.D.

130. Manchester Courier, 24 Sept. 1909, H.C. Vol.D.

131. Manchester Courier, 20 July 1912, p.7.

132. Pogson, pp.200-01. He only notes productions from 26 Sept.1910 but see Manchester Evening News, 23 July 1910 and 2 Aug.1910, H.C. Vol.E.

133. Manchester Gaiety and Midland Theatre Programmes, Vols: 3 and 4 respectively. In Manchester Central Reference Library, Theatre Collection, ref. Ma.166. Pogson makes no references to either production.

134. G. Savory (Ed), Granda's Manchester Plays, Manchester U.P., 1962. This also includes works by Brighouse and Monkhouse.

repute in Manchester: the Brasenose Club, 94 Mosley Street. Here  
*"Manchester's artists, musicians and intellectuals met."*<sup>(135)</sup>

Members included people like H.M.Acton, W.T.Arnold, Richard Pankhurst, Edwin Waugh and Spenser Wilkinson. Perhaps its biggest membership was drawn from the theatre. A look at its Book of Strangers<sup>(136)</sup> shows the signatures of people like (alphabetically for convenience): J.E.Agate; Henry Austin; Granville-Barker; A.Bourchier; Lewis Casson; Gilbert Clarke; H.B.Irving; J.Kahane; Charles McEvoy; Cyril Maude; A.N.Monkhouse; Esmé Percy; Nigel Playfair; Fred Terry; H.Beerbohm Tree; and of course Houghton. Arnold Bennett recalled being taken out *"to dine at the Brazenose [sic] Club where the food was excellent."*<sup>(137)</sup> Payne, who had taken Houghton, must have been very pleased with the production and perhaps the conversation can be guessed at if one bears in mind that the play was on again at the Gaiety within four weeks. Payne in fact took the play on tour in 1913-14.<sup>(138)</sup>

Immediately after completing Independent Means Houghton began work on a three act comedy entitled Marriages in the Making (January-April 1909).<sup>(139)</sup> This play has never been performed. It was clearly inspired by

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135. D.Ayerst, Guardian, op.cit. p.206.

136. Introduction Book of Strangers As Members for A Week, Manchester Central Reference Library, Archives, ref.M17/8/5 and M17/8/4/3.

137. F.Swinerton (Ed), The Journal of Arnold Bennett, op.cit. p.203 (4 Dec. 1909).

138. Introduction, p.xliii.

139. *ibid.* A.Nicoll, English Drama 1900-1930, p.734 maintains that it was written 1909-10.

Meredith's novel The Egoist : a comedy in narrative (1879). Perhaps to make this abundantly clear (and bearing in mind all that has been said about inspiration and influences p.78 supra) Houghton inscribed on the title page the following quotation from the novel: "*The love-season is the carnival of egoism, and it brings the touchstone to our natures*" - Meredith, The Egoist [The Works, Vol.1, p.96). Moreover, he even begins the play in such a way as to leave no doubt:

*... on the seat of the lower window DOLLY CARTWRIGHT is curled up reading a pocket edition of Meredith's 'The Egoist'...*

Mrs Cartwright: (suspiciously) What are you reading?

Dolly: George Meredith : The Egoist.

Mrs.C. (relieved) Oh, Meredith! I never can make his people out. They don't talk like human beings.

Dolly: Don't you think that some of them are very like the people we meet, anyhow?

Mrs.C. Oh, I dare say! (She yawns).

[The Works, pp.102-03]

This opening in fact establishes the play's plot and theme: a humorous but brief dramatisation based on the novel. However, its technique is similar to that of Independent Means (a point made by Dixon Scott (p. 83 supra), and therefore Brighthouse remains consistent in his belief that the play is no more than a "*light comedy of slight texture, hardly living up to the promise of its first act.*"<sup>(140)</sup> Nonetheless, it still possesses examples of Houghton's positive qualities of humour, wit and clever dialogue. Had it been acted then it may not have been as successful as Independent Means: its technique was too similar, but more importantly it lacked that fresh feeling of contemporaneity which was at least present in Independent Means and The Dear Departed. The reactions to Independent Means must

have made Houghton wary; he apparently never offered it to the Gaiety or any theatre for production.<sup>(141)</sup>

For the next six months Houghton stopped writing plays (perhaps feeling unhappy about his two previous efforts). This, and another in 1912, were the longest breaks he ever took from writing. What emerged after this first break was to be his most popular play so far (and second most popular ever). It would, however, be convenient, before looking at that play (see Ch.5.), to consider two other influences upon him as a conclusion to this chapter: one is Harold Brighouse and the other is the Swan Club.

Harold Brighouse (1882-1958) is perhaps best remembered for Hobson's Choice. There is in fact a very strong link between Houghton, Brighouse and this play, a fact little known. In September 1908 A.N.Monkhouse's first play, Reaping The Whirlwind, one-act, had its first showing at the Gaiety.<sup>(142)</sup> It received favourable reviews<sup>(143)</sup> and reappeared at the Gaiety on 9 November 1908<sup>(144)</sup> and then went on tour. Iden Payne was less happy with it, however, particularly the acting:

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141. Another dramatised version of the novel does exist: The Egoist by G.Meredith and A.Sutro, privately printed, 1920 (see The National Union Catalog Pre 1956 Imprints, Mansell, 1975, Vol.377, p.77, and for the story behind its genesis see A.Sutro, Celebrities and Simple Souls, Duckworth, 1933, pp.53-55).
142. A.Nicoll, English Drama 1900-1930, op.cit. p.839.
143. e.g. The Manchester Guardian (by Agate) 29 Sept.1908; Manchester Dispatch, 30 Sept; in H.C. Vol.B.
144. Pogson, p.199.

*Reaping the Whirlwind .... will not come on for some time until in fact I can get a really suitable cast. I am sorry to say that the cast I was compelled to give it when last on tour was by no means adequate ... and the play is one of those which, if not acted in the exact key it demands, loses all its quality; and this is what unfortunately happened and so I decided to drop the play until I could secure a really exceptional cast. (145)*

It would then seem that at about that period Houghton, Brighouse and Payne met in the American bar of the Midland Hotel, as it was literally across the road from the Gaiety and was a favoured haunt of the Company. Payne maintains that during their conversation both playwrights had disapproved of the acting of one of the principal parts in the play then running at the Gaiety (unidentified, hence my deduction). His retort was that it had been a case of Hobson's Choice - there was nobody else available who would have been better:

*No sooner had I said this than it occurred to me that the phrase would make a good title for a play. I said so and Houghton and Brighouse agreed. A friendly argument arose as to which of them should be the author of the hypothetical Hobson's Choice. I suggested that they toss a coin. This they did and Brighouse won. (146)*

Brighouse, however, gives a modified account of the incident:

*Hobson's Choice began with its name. Stanley Houghton, Iden Payne ... and I sat together discussing phrase-titles. "Hobson's Choice" said Payne. "That's a good one which hasn't been used." Houghton and I looked at each other; two playwrights and one title. We tossed and Houghton won. (147)*

Perhaps both versions are correct in detail but with Brighouse's conclusion being the outcome since years after the incident Brighouse recalls that after the playwright's death, Houghton's father gave him his notebooks:

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- 145. Letter from Payne to Monkhouse, 23 March 1909, ANM.10.
  - 146. A Life in a Wooden O, op.cit, p.125.
  - 147. John Bull, 12 June 1932: article entitled 'Hobson - Our Choice' by Brighouse. In Brighouse Collection.

*in a list of unused possible titles I found 'Hobson's Choice'. It seemed to me necessary to do something about it.* (148)

He did during the War and sent the completed play to Payne who by then worked in America, where it received its first showing. (149) It was not until 1916 that it was seen in England. (150)

This incident is one example of the strong bond that existed between the two playwrights. Their friendship was well known, much like that of Wordsworth and Coleridge: each encouraged the other. They did in fact collaborate on a play, The Hillarys, of which more will be said later (see Ch.6.). Because of this link between them, and in the absence of any biography on Brighouse, it may be pertinent to consider briefly the life of that playwright. His own autobiography leaves much to be desired: *"chary of the egotistic ... a narrative that is laconic, crisp and healthily astringent. It errs, if anything, on the side of understatement and a reluctance ... to confess"*. (151) The absence of a biography is typical of that group that became known as The Manchester School of Dramatists. (152)

Houghton had little chance to decline but Monkhouse and Brighouse often

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148. John Bull, op.cit.

149. A Life in a Wooden O, op.cit. p.125.

150. A.Nicoll, English Drama 1900-1930, p.530.

151. The Times Literary Supplement, 15 May 1953, reviewing What I Have Had : Chapters in Autobiography, Harrap, 1953. Both the review and the typescript are to be located in the Brighouse Collection at Eccles Public Library.

152. A generic term used to describe writers of the area (see O.C.T. p.616). Apart from Houghton, Brighouse and Monkhouse it generally included (amongst others, and alphabetically): A.Arabian; P.R.Bennett; G.Cannan; C.A.Forrest; J.Kahane; L.du Garde Peach; H.M.Richardson; F.H.Rose. See also T.Pratt, The Manchester Dramatists, Sherratt and Hughes, 1914.

declined. For example:

*owing to Mr. Brighthouse's retiring nature, it is not going to be possible to prevent the destruction of the many letters he received during the course of his career as a writer, while the family refuses to invade his privacy to the extent of allowing a biographical study. (153)*

Fortunately, however, after several requests, Brighthouse's sister did consent to offer some biographical details:

*In his lifetime he forbade me to keep his letters, so I have burned every one (154).... [we] acted in short plays with two actors, he and I dressed in old lace curtains and bright ribbons .... Our parents wanted him to go to Oxford but he refused, he said that Universities produced a type .... He was shy and retreated to an attic when visitors called and nothing could bring him down until the front door closed upon them .... He liked to be with good friends but not with a big gathering of people .... and many young folk came to ask him advice on acting as a career .... Hobson's Choice ... was not my brother's favourite work .... He used to begin writing at 3 am. fortified by chocolates and digestive biscuits. (155)*

Gerald Cumberland provides an exaggerated account of both playwrights' writing strategy:

*Every afternoon Houghton and Brighthouse would close their ledgers, or petty-cash books, or whatever it was they did close, and rush off home - Brighthouse to catch, perhaps, his six-five pm train to Eccles, and Houghton to jump gymnastically ... on to a passing tram bound for Alexandra Park. After a hurried meal, out with the MSS., the notebooks, the typescript and to work! And how hard they did work! (156)*

On leaving Manchester Grammar School (MGS) in 1899 he was employed at

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- 153. Letter to J.C.Trewin from the Librarian of Eccles Library, 18 July 1960, in Brighthouse Collection.
  - 154. Letters do exist, however, at Eccles Library and the John Rylands University of Manchester Library (Deansgate).
  - 155. Located in Brighthouse Collection, dated July 1965, entitled 'Notes on an old Victorian' by H.C.Brighthouse.
  - 156. Set Down in Malice, op.cit. p.57.

Houldsworth and Gibb Ltd, Swinton, Manchester as a cloth salesman<sup>(157)</sup> (like Houghton). His father was its managing director. It would appear that he was determined not to remain in such an occupation longer than necessary. Jack Kahane (1887-1939), also ex MGS<sup>(158)</sup> and in cotton, recalls this vividly:

*How to get out of it? Brig had definite ideas. I hadn't. He was going to be a playwright .... "Well, Jack", he said, his eyes glinting, "as far as I am concerned, the theatre's the only way out of here, and you must do as you like." (159)*

Kahane, who was to befriend Houghton in later days, did of course "get out of it". He wrote plays and novels (dedicating The Gay Intrigue to Brighouse)<sup>(160)</sup> and became a publisher of James Joyce (Haveth Childers Everywhere) and Henry Miller (Tropic of Cancer). Indeed, D.H. Lawrence telephoned him to request he publish Lady Chatterley's Lover but he refused.<sup>(161)</sup> Kahane's death in 1939 came as a deep shock to Brighouse and highlights the closeness of their relationship.<sup>(162)</sup> In 1902, aged twenty, Brighouse was posted by his firm to London at a salary of £150.<sup>(163)</sup> (£4,500 in 1981). With little to do he extended that interest in drama begun as a child (see p. 18 supra), which included taking part (between 1900-01) in Houghton's "little comic operas and farces"<sup>(164)</sup>, and visited the theatres:

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157. Details supplied by the firm to the Brighouse Collection, 26 Aug. 1963.

158. MGS Register, p.150.

159. Jack Kahane, Memoirs of a Booklegger, Michael Joseph, 1939, pp.7-8.

160. Brighouse, What I have had, op.cit. p.43. Brighouse inadvertently refers to Kahane's autobiography as Memoirs of a Bootlegger.

161. Kahane, Memoirs of a Booklegger, op.cit. pp.219, 261, 225 respectively.

162. Letter from Brighouse to Cyril Hogg of Samuel French Ltd, 19 Sept. 1939, in Brighouse Collection.

163. What I have had, op.cit. p.32.

164. Introduction, p.xxiii.



*All his holidays he spent in London, and went to a play every evening and to every matinée. When he got home from the office he wrote hard into the night. He wrote, thought, lived, dreamed, saw plays.* (165)

The experience, perhaps exaggerated, did have its effects, however:

*It was my rich, random, unpremeditated first apprenticeship to play-writing, though I had not then thought of myself as a potential playwright, and it lasted for two years.* (166)

Later, having returned to Manchester, he had occasionally to visit the Metropolis and it was on one such visit that something occurred to him: having seen an unidentified play of poor quality he decided that he could do better: *"I wrote a five act romantic drama and sent it to Forbes-Robertson."* (167) The play (unidentified) was rejected but the advice to try one-act plays first *"of the life you know"* was welcomed. This he did and prior to his death wrote some fifty plays of which over half were one-acters. (168) He also wrote several novels and contributed much to newspapers, particularly The Manchester Guardian. (169) He married around 1904 and had one daughter. As noted earlier, Hobson's Choice, was not his favourite play, but it is his most enduring. (170)

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165. Memoirs of a Booklegger, op.cit. p.7.

166. What I have had, op.cit. p.35.

167. *ibid.*, p.38.

168. See A.Nicoll, English Drama 1900-1930, op.cit. pp.529-31. Brighouse also wrote under the pseudonym of 'Olive Conway'.

169. The majority are in the Brighouse Collection.

170. Its latest London revival for example was in February 1982 at the Theatre Royal. It starred Penelope Keith, Anthony Quayle and Trevor Peacock. As a film it won the British Film Academy Award for Best British Film of 1954. In 1916, during one week at the Apollo it grossed £1,033 (£18,594 in 1981) - see The Journal, 1 Aug. 1958, p.3. in Brighouse Collection. The MS. of the play is also in the Brighouse Collection: it shows several minor changes to the published versions and also has some additional closing lines.

After his first long play, Dealing in Futures (1909), Houghton wrote to Brighthouse and quite modestly predicted that

*we are the only two Manchester men whose plays are likely to be worth anything.* (171)

Houghton had been to see the play (at the Gaiety on 29 August 1910) (172) and the letter was a complimentary review. Its effect was significant: "*that letter sealed our friendship*". (173) Brighthouse died on 25 July 1958 and was cremated at Golders Green Crematorium. (174)

Some time in 1908 Jack Kahane began to give private French lessons to a Walter Mudie, "*a youth of Apollonian beauty ... and limitless intellectual attainments.*" (175) Mudie was apparently a friend of Houghton's since boyhood (176) and was "*of the Library*". (177) This would be Mudie's Circulating Library. Unfortunately Guinevere L.Griest in Mudie's Circulating Library and the Victorian Novel (David and Charles, 1970) makes no mention of Houghton or Mudie other than "*Mr. Walter Mudie generously shared with me his recollections of the Library.*" (p.xii.) In a letter to me she explained that thirty years ago her talks with Walter Mudie "*revolved around the library. All personal details about Mr. Mudie were related to his knowledge of the library or of Charles Edward Mudie.*" (178) However, it would seem that

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171. Letter in What I have had, op.cit. pp.177-78.

172. Pogson, p.201.

173. What I have had, op.cit. p.178.

174. The Manchester Guardian, 26 July 1958, in Brighthouse Collection.

175. Memoirs of a Booklegger, op.cit. p.23.

176. Set Down in Malice, op.cit. p.65.

177. Memoirs of a Booklegger, op.cit. p.23.

178. 31 Aug.1983. Ms.Griest is presently Deputy Director, Division of Fellowships and Seminars National Endowment For the Humanities, Washington, D.C.

Walter Mudie worked at Mudie's Manchester Library, 10-12 Barton Arcade, St. Ann's Square, Manchester.<sup>(179)</sup> He met Gerald Cumberland and along with Brighthouse the four of them would meet daily for lunch in a "*lugubrious upstairs room of a third-rate restaurant*".<sup>(180)</sup> It was in fact called The Swan, a public-house (now demolished) off Market Street. Although there are no known official records of what became the Swan Club in existence, several references to it do exist. Gerald Cumberland in Set Down in Malice recalls being "*elected a member of a funny little coterie in Manchester*" (p.56) whilst Brighthouse in What I have had states that it "*became, in its small way, a legend.*" (p.40) The Club consisted of "*young intellectuals ... nearly all in business & hating it.*"<sup>(181)</sup> Basil Dean describes it more thoroughly:

*a caucus of young businessmen who used to meet informally in the lunch hour in one of the domino-infested cafés off Market Street, there to argue contumaciously about matters of public interest. The group regarded themselves as part of the Northern intelligentsia who had pioneered reform in the past, and would do so again .... There were no rules, no subscriptions and no credentials beyond an ability to speak one's own mind and to be ready for instant contradiction.* (182)

Walter Mudie later brought Stanley Houghton along to one of its meetings.

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179. On 12 Sept. 1911 he wrote a letter to the Libraries' Sub-Committee of Manchester offering books at discount prices. It is signed Walter H. Mudie. Copy located in Minutes of Sub-Committees 1910-12 in Manchester Central Reference Library Archives.
180. Memoirs of a Booklegger, op.cit. p.24.
181. Letter from Brighthouse to W.W.Hoult, (postmark) 30 May 1931 in Brighthouse Collection. Hoult apparently researched Dixon Scott for a B.A. and at the time was considering an M.A. on 'The Manchester School of Dramatists'. He does not appear to have written it.
182. Basil Dean, Seven Ages : an autobiography 1888-1927, Hutchinson, 1970, p.66.

From then the membership increased to over fourteen: C.M.Abercrombie; Harry Bamber; Felix Berlyn; H.Brighouse; Gerald Cumberland; Charles Forrest; H.C.Hirschorn; Stanley Houghton; Jack Kahane; Ernest Marriott; Walter Mudie; L.B.Pace; Arnold Percy; Tinsley Pratt; W.P.Price-Heywood. 'Casual Visitors' were Lascelles Abercrombie, Sir Patrick Abercrombie; Haslam Mills; Sammy Langford; and members of the Hallé Orchestra, particularly Alfred Barker and Julius Harrison. (183)

By December 1910 such a gathering forced the Club to move to new premises, as announced by Brighouse to Basil Dean:

*Swan Club Xmas dinner on Wednesday. We've found new quarters - better food etc. & turn up a daily eight to ten.* (184)

Apparently Dean had not been for some time and Brighouse was reminding him of what he was missing: *"Ever heard of Kahane's Manchester Musical Society? You would if you still Swanned"*. (ibid.) The new venue was the Café Royal, (185) adjacent to the Gaiety. This then encouraged others such as Payne and Esmé Percy of the Gaiety to call in. At least fourteen of the members were caricatured by Ernest Marriott (186) (including himself) and the sketches hung on the walls of the Club, a necessary prerequisite *"before reaching full membership."* (187)

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183. See What I have had, op.cit. p.41 ff. where some of their respective abilities are mentioned (excluding T.Pratt who is not mentioned but see fn.94). Memoirs of a Booklegger, op.cit. pp.25-26 is also relevant.

184. Letter dated 17 Dec. 1910 in Basil Dean Collection, John Rylands University of Manchester Library (Deansgate).

185. Confirmed in a letter from Brighouse to W.W.Hoult 30 May 1931(postmark) in Brighouse Collection,

186. For facts about Marriott see:— fn.94. In addition it may be noted that he became Gordon Craig's business manager in Florence (see What I have had, op.cit. p.46.).

187. Introduction, p.xvi.

Houghton's has already been referred to and those of Marriott, Brighouse and Payne are all reproduced in What I have had, (pp.48, opposite title page, 64, respectively), The whereabouts of any of the originals is unknown.

The importance of this Club is that it brought Houghton into direct contact with men of intelligence, reputation and varying interests. Their discussions must have encouraged this naturally reticent man to strive even harder in his goal:

*We were each to produce works of art according to our genius, and when they were introduced to the public they were to bear our sign, the Swan. We were going to leave our mark on our generation and show the world that what Manchester writes today London will flock to see ... or to buy ... tomorrow.* (188)

Marriott designed the emblem: (189) a swan with a coronet above it (to the right) and the initials M.S.C. underneath it. Such an emblem appears on several of the title pages of works by the Club's members, particularly those of Houghton and Brighouse. It also appears on all three volumes of The Works of Stanley Houghton.

The discussions at the Club were apparently very frank:

*It was part of the intellectual snobbery of the Club to profess contempt for commercial success. Houghton, a gentle, kindly, creature, smiled away chaff that contained more than a tinge of envy.* (190)

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188. Memoirs of a Booklegger, op.cit. p.24.

189. Introduction, p.xvi.

190. Basil Dean, Seven Ages, op.cit, p.66.

Indeed,

*In this little coterie Houghton was a veritable whale among the minnows .... In conversation he could be ready, and his repartee was frequently brilliant .... But I must confess that I rarely saw him in company in which there were not two or three who were hostile to him. (191)*

Cumberland in fact recollects one such argument in his own characteristic style. Although no mention is made of the Swan Club it would seem to be the venue:

*Houghton felt every word and act of hostility; but he never showed weakness under opposition, and he could hit back when he thought it worthwhile. I once witnessed a physical assault upon him [Houghton] after a rather rowdy dinner, when we all took to ragging each other. There was no excuse for the assault ... but Houghton received the blow without a word ... [he] paled and his large eyes gleamed, and I have no doubt that on a subsequent occasion he settled the matter with the man who was responsible for his humiliation. (192)*

Such antagonism, even if only 'professional', certainly helped Houghton out of his shell: "It was noteworthy how, after his success, reserve left him." (193)

By the time of the First World War (Houghton died in December 1913) the Swan Club's existence ceased. Brighouse, almost nostalgically, recalls:

*War, or causes prior to the War, removed a high percentage of its members from Manchester. For me the loss of Swan Club cut-and-thrust talk was a calamity .... I learned much at the Swan. (194)*

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191. G.Cumberland, Set Down in Malice, op.cit. pp.57-59.

192. *ibid.* p.65.

193. Introduction, p.xvi.

194. What I have had, op.cit. p.47.

Much later, in 1920, an article in The Manchester Guardian reminisced about Houghton and the Swan Club: it recalled, *the young man, weary of just trifling with letters in minor theatre criticisms and 'back page articles' ... and always very properly (if inconveniently) more resentful of sub-editing than of rejection [who was part of] that boyish experiment in Bohemianism which was to leaven the harsh Nonconformity and material preoccupation of Manchester, and of which the chief features were churchwarden pipes, pint pots, eager conversations and mutual admiration of the members. And always Houghton's confidence that he would and could write something that should force the elder generations to admit he was no vain trifler.* (195)

In conclusion the last word could be left to Houghton. Uncorroborated, it concerns a visit made by Gerald Cumberland to Houghton in late 1912:

... "We never see you at the Swan Club nowadays. It must not be said of you that you desert old friends, that success has made you careless of those you once liked." [He continues by saying that Houghton sensed the irony in his tone and replied] "The truth is that the Company I find at the Swan Club is not always very congenial. One or two new men have been lately introduced .... And I am kept very busy ... devoting all my energy to literary work ... from dawn to dusk." (196)

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195. 17 May 1920, H.C. Vol.Q. The article gives the impression that the reporter was a member of the Swan Club. It is signed A.S.W. - probably A.S.Wallace who joined the paper in Nov.1909 and eventually succeeded Monkhouse as Literary Editor and Dramatic Critic (see D.Ayerst, Guardian, op.cit. p.324). Wallace is not mentioned in any references to the Swan Club, however.

196. Set Down in Malice, op.cit. p.61.

This chapter has not only traced the history of Houghton's environment but also its influences upon his playwriting and his incipient professional successes. As such the way is now paved for a consideration of his first major success, The Younger Generation (1909), but before doing so it will be necessary to consider one other foremost institution of the day since it too played a central role in Houghton's literary and personal life - The Manchester Guardian. It has only been touched on so far but its importance warrants a full chapter.



CHAPTER FOUR  
THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN

In 1921 a book was published to celebrate The Manchester Guardian's centenary. On the front cover it carried the following notice:

*This year The Manchester Guardian celebrated its centenary to the accompaniment of what must have been a world-wide chorus of congratulation. It was not only a newspaper that was honoured, but a standard; for the Guardian has ensured respect even from its opponents by sincerity and measure in days when those things were hard to maintain. But, beyond this, the associations of the Guardian have been with courses and individuals of the greatest moment and ... the history of the paper ... is practically a history of Manchester, and, in certain aspects, a history of England during a hundred years.* (1)

The first edition appeared on 5 May 1821<sup>(2)</sup> and is still in production today although it dropped the word 'Manchester' from its title on 24 August 1959 because by then nearly two-thirds of its circulation lay outside Manchester.<sup>(3)</sup> Its origin, almost anecdotal, is not relevant to this study save to say that its founder John Edward Taylor (1791-1844) some three years after its institution married his cousin Sophia Russell Scott whose brother Russell later became the father of C.P. Scott, its future editor of renown.<sup>(4)</sup>

C.P. Scott (1846-1932) graduated from Oxford in 1869 with a first in 'Greats' and in 1871 was invited to join The Manchester Guardian (M.G.)

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1. William Haslam Mills, The Manchester Guardian : a century of history, Chatto and Windus, 1921.
  2. *ibid.* p.4.
  3. D. Ayerst, Guardian : biography of a newspaper, Collins, 1971, p.627.
  4. W.H. Mills, *op.cit.* p.54. The couple lived at No. 13 The Crescent, Salford, "one of the desirable quarters of the town." (p.58).

staff and a year later, aged twenty-five, he became its editor, enriching and ornamenting "*all Liberal causes the world over.*"<sup>(5)</sup>

In 1874 Scott married Rachel Susan Cook (whom George Eliot considered to be "*the most beautiful woman she had ever seen.*")<sup>(6)</sup> the daughter of the professor of Ecclesiastical History at St. Andrew's and at one time Moderator of the Established Church of Scotland. Mrs. Scott was in fact one of seven original students of a college which afterwards became Girton College, Cambridge. Their daughter married one of the paper's highly regarded and influential members of staff - C.E. Montague.<sup>(7)</sup>

Politically the paper was staunchly Liberal. Between 1897 and 1902 for example the M.G. did "*what the London Liberal papers failed to do*" by becoming

*the dominant expression of radical thinking among educated men and women. Once again, as in the days of Cobden, Bright and the Manchester School, the leadership of the intellectual Left came from the North West, only this time it was from the Manchester Guardian. Radicals in the South East had their London political weeklies, such as the Speaker, but only Manchester provided a morning paper which fully met their needs.*<sup>(8)</sup>

Mills maintains that between 1903-14 the paper was "*the object of a great personal affection from the Liberal party*" (p.140) and that in 1909 Winston Churchill delivered a long and elaborate eulogy of it. Even President Wilson of the U.S.A. had praise for the M.G. according to Ayerst (p.410).

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5. W.H.Mills, op.cit. pp.105, 107.

6. D. Ayerst, op.cit. p.188.

7. W.H. Mills, op.cit. pp.105-9. For more details of Montague see Oliver Elton, C.E. Montague : a memoir, Chatto and Windus, 1929.

8. D. Ayerst, op.cit. p.266.

Between 1900 and 1920 the paper's daily circulation varied between 48,000-65,000 compared with The Times 35,000-125,000, and The Telegraph (decline) 260,000-170,000.<sup>(9)</sup> An important body of the readers of the M.G. was drawn from the Cotton Exchange. Ayerst maintains that in 1906, for example, the 9,000 members of the Exchange were all probably readers of the paper: *"Each needed the other. City reporters, alone among journalists, provide news on which men buy and sell .... The Guardian's commercial staff had to be judicious and incorruptible."* (p.336). Indeed, A.N. Monkhouse was initially employed by the M.G. as a commercial writer. Doubtless, Houghton in his work as a grey cloth salesman studied the commercial paper avidly.

Its staff and contributors reads like a literary roll of honour, as the following alphabetical list (by no means exclusive) shows:  
W.T. Arnold (grandson of Arnold of Rugby); James Agate; Hilaire Belloc; Arnold Bennett; Harold Brighouse; Ivor Brown; Neville Cardus; T.S. Eliot; C.H. Herford; G.H. Mair; John Masefield; Malcolm Muggeridge; Gilbert Murray; G.W.E. Russell; Dixon Scott; George Saintsbury; G.B. Shaw; Howard Spring; Harold Spender; A.G. Symonds; J.M. Synge; Dover Wilson.

The paper's praises from the world of literature and drama are equally impressive. For example, Gordon Bottomley (poet and successful verse dramatist) in letters to A.N. Monkhouse (who will be discussed in detail shortly) wrote that the paper *"by its enlightened civic sense and its care for the arts, can always exert influence and instil confidence"* and spoke of it *"with its long record of cultural wisdom"*

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9. D. Ayerst, op.cit. p.300.

and spiritual insight."<sup>(10)</sup> Walter De La Mare "said some very pleasant things about the M.G.",<sup>(11)</sup> whilst Harold Munro ('Saki') complained that he did not "often get the opportunity of seeing the M.G. [in London] .... [and] Having once seen it regularly, it is difficult to accustom oneself to other rags." Indeed, "It's strange how often my thoughts drift back to Manchester .... There are certain very strong attractions ... not least of which ... I always feel to be produced [i.e. a strong emotion] by that unique atmosphere of the M.G."<sup>(12)</sup> St. John Ervine also regarded it as "one of the very best daily newspapers in the U.K."<sup>(13)</sup>, whilst A.E.F. Horniman during the sale of the Gaiety in 1920 expressed a debt: "You did your best to keep me .... I have always felt that you have acted towards me as a kindly chaperone, and that if I had done anything irregular you would have chided me".<sup>(14)</sup> This view was supported by Payne: "a newspaper celebrated for its high standard of dramatic criticism, to ensure intelligent recognition of our endeavours."<sup>(15)</sup> Basil Dean in his notes for a lecture commented that London critics purposely journeyed to Manchester to see its plays simply "to add their strictures to those of the Guardian".<sup>(16)</sup> Little wonder then that Jack Kahane states

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10. 9 June 1921 and 30 Oct. 1932 respectively. ANM 1.
  11. Letter from Eric Gillett to Monkhouse, 14 March 1932, *ibid*.
  12. Letters from Munro to Monkhouse, 21 May 1917 and 17 Oct. 1917, respectively, *ibid*.
  13. The New Weekly, 9 May 1914, H.C. Vol.M.
  14. The Manchester Guardian, 31 Dec. 1920, H.C. Vol.Q.
  15. A Life in a Wooden O, op.cit. p.79.
  16. Lecture untitled and undated. No venue given. It puts forward reasons for the building of a civic theatre in Manchester (p.6.). In Dean Collection, John Rylands University of Manchester Library (Deansgate).

*"The Manchester Guardian was a divinity towards which all we young men shaped our ends."*<sup>(17)</sup> Arnold Bennett, perhaps, provides the best insight into the paper's majesty. C.P. Scott had asked him to review Monkhouse's novel Dying Fires (1912). Bennett pointed out that he normally charged a fee of £26.5.0. per column (£682.50 in 1981) but this was different: *"[I never] regard my contributions to it [the M.G.] as a purely commercial transaction. I shall be perfectly content with whatever payment you think proper to make"*.<sup>(18)</sup> He received eight guineas (£221 in 1981). Moreover, he asked Scott for the review copy *"as the book is one I should like to keep"* and he also retained his own proof sheets of the review which James Agate later purchased in 1936.<sup>(19)</sup> Not surprisingly Bennett confided in Monkhouse that it was *"the greatest daily the world has ever seen"*,<sup>(20)</sup> and then in his short story, The Death of Simon Fuge, wrote:

*"I've often heard that it's a very good paper" ....*

*"It isn't a very good paper ... It's the best paper in the world".*<sup>(21)</sup>

The influence of The Manchester Guardian was profound and that was the intention of C.P. Scott. He was particularly keen to give prominence to art, exhibitions, music, drama and the book review: *"He took care*

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17. Memoirs of a Booklegger, op.cit. p.15.

18. D. Ayerst, op.cit. p.332.

19. *ibid.*

20. Letter to Monkhouse, 30 Aug. 1913, ANM.1.

21. A collection of short stories entitled, The Grim Smile of the Five Towns, Chatto and Windus, 1929, p.219. (first pub.1907)

that they had sufficient prominence and that they were in good hands." Moreover, he insisted "that all Guardian critics, whatever they wrote about - plays, painting, poetry or music - should write well." (22)

Initially he insisted on being the paper's principal reviewer (until Monkhouse and Montague arrived) but eventually yielded save to insist on seeing "each night the list of books going out and the reviewers to whom they were being sent. This he would read carefully and, on occasion, amend." (23) The fact that Stanley Houghton had sixty-three book reviews (24) printed by the paper speaks for itself. Some of these will be considered shortly. The influence was there:

*The prominence that Scott gave to book reviews and their much better quality under his editorship helped to spread the Guardian's influence outside its immediate surroundings.* (25)

Once again support can be found not only for the paper's stance in such matters but also for its instigator:

*In 'The Daily Mail Year Book', against the entry 'Manchester Guardian', you will find these words: "The best newspaper in the world" .... the word "best" when applied to a newspaper, does not signify a newspaper that shrieks louder than any other newspaper .... It signifies ... a paper whose editor will not sacrifice a single ideal in order to increase his circulation, who has the power of infusing his staff with his own enthusiasms, and who regards the arts as a necessary part of a decent human existence.* (26)

and,

*a newspaper not given to facile enthusiasms about new writers, and a paper which ... reviews fiction more capably and conscientiously than any other daily in the kingdom.* (27)

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22. D.Ayerst, op.cit. p.185.

23. ibid.

24. See Appendix 5.

25. D.Ayerst, op.cit. p.186.

26. Gerald Cumberland, Set Down in Malice, op.cit. p.154.

27. Arnold Bennett, Books and Persons : being a comment on a past epoch 1908-11, Chatto and Windus, 1917, p.238.

Much the same can be said about the paper's Miscellany column "to which crowds of professional and amateur journalists ... brought their offerings."<sup>(28)</sup> Houghton contributed twenty-four articles<sup>(29)</sup> to that column but it is difficult to determine which articles are his since initials are not used.<sup>(30)</sup> At one time it was edited by Masfield.<sup>(31)</sup> Similarly, the so called 'back-page' article achieved a status all its own: "The ambition of all proper young men on the 'Manchester Guardian' was to write that first column on the last page". (Howard Spring).<sup>(32)</sup> W. Haslam Mills takes it further: "the back-page article ... has become one of the standing targets of literary marksmanship".<sup>(33)</sup> Stanley Houghton had nine such articles published (see Appendix 3) and these will be considered later in the thesis (see Ch.11.). For these he was paid a total of £18.18.0 (£530 in 1981).<sup>(34)</sup>

However, it is to dramatic criticism that one must turn in order to see effective influence in Manchester: "Scott brought a new quality to the regular dramatic criticism in the paper",<sup>(35)</sup> a view upheld by J.C. Trewin in his discussion of the paper's "group of probing literate drama critics."<sup>(36)</sup> Scott was intent on bringing to the cultural life of Manchester a disciplined, thorough examination not only of the actors but of the plays also. Whatever the relationship between the paper, its staff, the theatres, playwrights and actors,

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28. W.H. Mills, op.cit. p.126.

29. See Appendix 6.

30. Evidence that he contributed articles is found in the paper's Index to Literary Contributions (the records of payments made). Located in the archives of Manchester University. See p.416 infra.

31. Set Down in Malice, op.cit. p.75.

32. The Autobiography of Howard Spring, Collins, 1972, p.139.

33. W.H. Mills, op.cit. p.126.

34. Index to Literary Contributions - see p.416 infra.

35. D. Ayerst, op.cit., p.179.

36. J.C. Trewin, The Edwardian Theatre, Blackwell, 1976, p.104.

"friendship was not allowed to temper the critics' judgment".<sup>(37)</sup>

Just how true this was in general is not easy to establish except in the case of Houghton. It is for this reason that I disagree with Trewin's belief that the "young lions" of the paper used to "exercise themselves" and expend "a good deal of decorative writing on nothing in particular."<sup>(38)</sup>

With Houghton the former was true but (as will be seen) he never reviewed any one of the one hundred and twenty-three plays he did see 'professionally' (see Appendix 4) without being entirely honest and critical: there was no fear of the loss of favour or friendship. Indeed on this particular point it would seem that Houghton was typical:

*the 'Manchester Guardian's' reviewing easily surpasses that of any other daily paper, except, possibly, the 'Times' in its Literary Supplement. The 'Guardian' relies on mere sheer intellectual power .... Its theatrical critics, for example, take joy in speaking the exact truth* (39)

Houghton's frankness, at times, did have some interesting consequences, as will be seen. Scott himself was not directly connected with the theatre although it may be pertinent to mention here that it was he who arbitrated the final settlement between Lady Gregory and A.E.F. Horniman in relation to the Abbey Theatre, Dublin.<sup>(40)</sup>

Concluding this section it is perhaps no exaggeration to say that along with all that Manchester had to offer

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37. D. Ayerst, op.cit. p.332.

38. J.C. Trewin, op.cit. p.179.

39. Arnold Bennett, Books and Persons : being a comment on a past epoch 1908-11, op.cit. pp.47-48.

40. D. Ayerst, op.cit. p.332.



*the Guardian critics could provide a young man with a course in English literature which few universities could surpass. (41)*

Harold Brighthouse had no doubt:

*allowing for illiterate infancy ... I have read it [the M.G.] for sixty years .... In politics, literature, and art it must positively have influenced me. (42)*

Finally, Malcolm Muggeridge recalls how

*the Manchester Guardian played a significant part in the development of literature in its great days. Now, alas, not. (43)*

Having thus outlined The Manchester Guardian's early history, reputation and influence, it would now be appropriate to consider Houghton's connections with it since the links not only extended into his literary works but also into his personal life.

Politically Houghton was as Liberal as the very paper he contributed to, a point at first underestimated by Brighthouse (in 1914):

*Politically, he was not active, but may be said to have professed Socialism and practised Liberalism. Politics interested him mildly as a rule. (44)*

Forty years later, however, he changed his viewpoint. Speaking of the Swan Club (see Ch.3) and its discussions he said:

*Houghton .... indeed, was apt to be the silent member except when ... politics came up. He did more than wear his Liberalism like a cockade; he trumpeted it. (45)*

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41. D. Ayerst, op.cit. p.416.
  42. What I have had, op.cit. p.175.
  43. Letter to the writer, Nov.1981.
  44. Introduction, p.xiii.
  45. What I have had, op.cit. p.42.

Such fervour can be traced in several political articles he contributed to the M.G. (see Appendix 3). The first was in December 1909 when he lent his weight to the arguments for the reform of the House of Lords. He wrote a thirty-six line political satire based humorously on the well known piece from Alice through the Looking-Glass:

Algy in Wonderland

*The Algy and the Ancestor  
Were walking hand in hand;  
They wept like anything to see  
The voters in the land.  
"If they were only cleared away",  
They said, "It would be grand".*

*"If fifty peers with fifty mops  
Swept it for half a year,  
Do you suppose", the Algy said  
"That they could get it clear?"  
"I doubt it", said the Ancestor,  
And shed a little tear.*

*"The time has come", the Algy said,  
"To talk of many things;  
Of window-frames and iron-bars  
The wicked alien brings,  
And whether publicans are saints  
Or Angels minus wings".*

*"Oh voters, will you walk with us",  
The Algy did beseech,  
"A pleasant walk, a pleasant talk,  
Upon the Tariff beach?"  
But unearned income was not  
Referred to in his speech.*

*The Algy said, "Pray, why not take  
disinterested advice?  
If I could vote instead of you  
That would be very nice.  
I wish you were not quite so deaf,  
I've had to ask you twice".*

*But all the voters looked at him  
And never a word they said;  
And every voter winked his eye  
And shook his wary head,  
Meaning to say he'd much prefer  
To vote himself instead. (46)*

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46. 15 Dec. 1909, p.5. It was accompanied by a sketch depicting the scene by H. Collier of Manchester (signed HYC). The scene and part of the poem appears in D. Ayerst, Guardian : biography of a newspaper, op.cit. p.327. It erroneously gives the date as 1910.

Houghton was paid £1.1.0 (£29.40 in 1981) for the poem.<sup>(47)</sup> One week later<sup>(48)</sup> he added his voice to the debate on 'Tariff Reform' as follows:

*(With apologies to W.S. Gilbert)*

*He is an Englishman!  
Though he himself has said it.  
It's a fact you'd scarcely credit,  
That he is an Englishman.*

*For he used to beat the Roos-ian,  
The French, the Turk, and Proos-ian,  
And the smart American.*

*But in spite of all temptations,  
To stand up to foreign nations,  
He is seized with palpitations,  
And he don't believe he can.*

*He proclaims in each direction  
His commercial imperfection,  
And he cries out for protection  
Like a true blue Englishman!  
(Like a true blue Englishman.)*

That earned him 10/6 (£14 in 1981). It was modelled on a song from H.M.S. Pinafore, Act 2.

Two days later, on Christmas Eve 1909, accompanied by a sketch of the ghost of an aged worker with a tool bag, followed by a decrepit old Lord with a walking stick, he submitted the following modification of the Ancient Mariner:

*The Rime of the Ancient Ancestor*

*It is an Ancient Ancestor  
And he giveth at the knee.  
"By thy grey beard and coronet,  
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?"*

*He holdeth up his skinny hand,  
"There was a Bill", quoth he,  
"That crossed our prow as we did plough  
The Parliamentary Sea".*

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47. Index to Literary Contributions - see p.416.

48. 22 Dec. 1909, p.5. With a sketch by Coller.

*"And when I saw that blessed law  
Black fury seized on me,  
I was the worst of them that cursed  
And threatened violently".*

*"God save thee, Ancient Ancestor,  
Now wherefore loook'st thou ill,  
What ails thee then?". "With my wild men  
I slew the Budget Bill.*

*"And I had done an hellish thing  
And it did work me woe.  
For all averred 'twas my act absurd  
That made the 'tide to flow'.*

*"A sadder and a wiser man  
I walk; like one in dread,  
Who having once turned round walks on  
And turns no more his head,  
Because he knows a spectre grim  
Doth close behind him tread".*

\* \* \* \* \*

*He ruleth best who loveth best  
All people great and small,  
He ruleth worst who loveth first  
His pocket most of all. (49)*

Houghton must have been at his peak in terms of political involvement at this period. The debate about the future of the House of Lords filled much of The Manchester Guardian. It sent a reporter to cover (in great detail) a speech given by Lord Salisbury in favour of the retention of the Lords as a second chamber. Lord Salisbury took the line that the Lords could interpret the nation's wishes. The meeting took place in Rugby on 28 December 1909 and reappeared in the following morning's edition. Houghton quickly reacted to the following extract:

*Now we are all Englishmen only by accident of birth.  
Just think of all the power, privileges, prosperity,  
and pride which we enjoy simply because we were born  
Englishmen. (p.3)*

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49. p.5. Sketch by Collier. He received the same fee as before.

To a sketch by Collier depicting a Lord on the back of a worker with the caption, 'Working Man: "Let go my hands & give a chap a chance",<sup>1</sup> he wrote a twenty line satire entitled 'The Accident of Birth':<sup>(50)</sup>

*There was a man in Ancoats, by accident of  
birth,  
He had to earn his living; in his larder there  
was death.  
But he had the British birthright (though his  
babes with hunger cried)  
Of power and prosperity and privilege and  
pride.*

*Although he was an Englishman he had not any  
land,  
He hadn't got a square yard of his own on  
which to stand,  
But he heard about the Colonies and Hin<sup>d</sup>ustan  
as well,  
And when they said he owned them all, with  
pride his heart did swell.*

*No servants licked his boots for him, and  
carried out his will,  
He wasn't a proconsul or a governor, but still  
He had at least one privilege, so everything was  
fair,  
The inestimable privilege of breathing British  
air.*

*He had a splendid salary of twenty bob a week  
(Except when out of collar, when for work he  
had to seek),  
It paid for rent and clothing and a bite of  
bread and cheese,  
And if that's not prosperity you're very hard  
to please.*

*He did not order men about, nor give to them  
the sack,  
But of place and pomp and dignity he never  
felt the lack,  
For he had the power of voting once in six or  
seven years,  
Till he had it taken from him by the British  
House of Peers. (51)*

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50. No model has been traced for this but its style is similar to W.S. Gilbert's Fifty 'Bob' Ballads : much sound and little sense, George Routledge and Sons, 1881.
51. 1 Jan.1910, p.5. Fee: 10/6 (£14 in 1981).

The great debate on 'Tariff Reform' elicited yet another satire from the pen of Houghton. Brighthouse has seen fit to print it in full in his Introduction to The Works (pp.xiii-xiv). What is not mentioned is the title ('Protecting British Industries') and the sketch by Collier accompanying it: people jeering Caruso as he sings on the stage and throwing things at him. The caption reads:

*Historic scene at Convent Garden Theatre : Tariff  
'Reform' Peers protesting against the engagement  
of Signor Caruso on the grounds that he was  
preventing British tenors from obtaining employment. (52)*

Houghton's final jibe at 'Tariff Reform' came on 11 January 1910 when he wrote a thirty-six line satire based on Tennyson's The Two Voices (1853). With a Collier sketch depicting a village with a baker's shop bearing the name G.N. Curzon and the arrival of a horse-drawn baker's van of Prestwich being attacked by villagers, he wrote:  
*"What are we coming to? Inhabitants of Cheadle protesting against  
free imports from Prestwich":*

The Two Voices

*A wild appeal the first voice made:  
"What shall we do for British trade,  
It's nearly done for, I'm afraid".*

*The second voice said, "I'm content  
To put a tax of ten per cent  
On goods brought from the continent".*

*The first voice cried, "Alas! Without  
A bigger tax than that I doubt  
If we can keep the scoundrels out".*

*The second voice at once began:  
"If we don't keep them out, by my plan,  
The German and the American,*

*The import tax that they will pay  
The cost of Dreadnoughts will defray,  
And pensions also, I dare say".*

*The first voice then did make reply:  
"But if they pay the duties, why  
On earth not make them very high?*

*If for your statement there are grounds  
Charge cent per cent, and make the hounds  
Pay my hundred million pounds.*

*But even if I do agree,  
The goods will still come in, you see,  
And then what better shall we be?*

*You can't deny it's very hard  
That every pot of French mustard  
Should mean that Coleman's trade is marred.*

*That every German apple-tart  
Should make the patriotic smart  
And break a British baker's heart.*

*The simplest way is to import  
No foreign goods of any sort  
In fact to shut up every port.*

*Exclusively for our own kin  
We'll forge and smelt and weave and spin  
And take each other's washing in. (53)*

His final jibe at the Peers came just three days before the above satire. It followed his usual pattern of being based on a well-known poem. This time he used Shelley's Song to the Men of England (1839) as a base for a Collier sketch of an imploring Lord, with the caption: 'Our Would-be Rulers':

To the Peers of England

*Peers of England, wherefore bow  
To the men who threaten now?  
For the conflict then prepare;  
Punish those who greatly dare.*

*Wherefore legislate and slave  
From the cradle to the grave  
For ungrateful men who would  
Take your land - nay, have your blood?*

*The wealth they gather they would keep,  
The seed they scatter they would reap,  
The robes they weave (but which you wear)  
From your shoulders they would tear.*

*From your coffers they would spoil  
Gold for which you do not toil;  
So to cellar-hole and den  
Up and drive them back again.*

*With plough and spade and hoe and loom  
They trace your grave and build your tomb  
And weave your winding-sheet, till ye  
Will nothing but a memory be.*

*Therefore drones of England forge  
Many a weapon, chain and scourge,  
That the swarming bees may know  
Drones are masters here below. (54)*

The Socialism Brighthouse refers to stems from Houghton's membership of the Clarion Club. (55) although a look at some of his plays (e.g. Independent Means) reveals such a bias although not of the didactic type:

*He did not sit in Olympian calm scanning the petty  
doings of mortal men with untroubled eyes, but made  
it clear that his sympathies were with the rebellious  
of this earth, the whole glorious league of the  
divinely discontented against despotism - whether  
it be the despotism of the fireside autocrat, the  
moralist, or the democrat.*

Indeed,

*He was not a controversialist .... He did not dogmatise.  
He did not stop his play to sermonise. He did not let  
his characters pause in their action to preach from the  
stage. What he wished to say they said for him in word  
and deed. (56)*

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54. 8 January 1910, p.7. Fee as above.  
55. Introduction, p.xv.  
56. A.L. Ellis, The English Review, Jan.1914, pp.276-77.



Between 31 August 1905 and 28 April 1913 Stanley Houghton contributed some two hundred and twenty-seven articles to The Manchester Guardian. For this he was paid approximately £172 (£4,670 in 1981). Brighouse underestimated this side of Houghton's output; he also missed valuable insights into Houghton's creative mind. The compilation of the above figures was painstaking and relied completely on the Index to Literary Contributions - the payment ledgers of The Manchester Guardian now held by the University of Manchester Archives (see p.416). An attempt was made to itemise Houghton's articles by the present staff of The Guardian (Library) but the list is far from complete and inaccurate. (57)

The most striking thing about Houghton's connection with the M.G. is the sheer volume of output. Attach this to the actual visits made to the theatres on its behalf or the time taken to read and review books and still remember that Houghton continued in full-time work along with his own playwriting and short-story writing, and one agrees with Brighouse's remark: *"he may indeed be said to have invented a candle combustible at once in four places"*. (Introduction, p.xi). Analysing such contributions is a difficult task because the approach can be taken from any number of angles. For the purposes of this thesis I intend to concentrate on those aspects which also highlight characteristics of Houghton's as seen in his own works: his practising of what he preached.

The predominant feature of his reviews is the wit and humour employed to express them. For example, The Walls of Jericho (Sutro; Gaiety:

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57. Only a quarter of the articles were collated, some wrongly dated. Kept in a file with Houghton's name on it in the library, 164 Deansgate, Manchester. My appendices would seem to be complete.

27 Nov.1906, p.7.):

*with Bouchier and Vanbrugh ... the walls are not shown to be knocked down very thoroughly ... She [Vanbrugh] is not an actress that tries to chloroform your critical faculties with a personality ... [although she] is playing with fire ... without the least intention of burning her fingers .... [Moreover] The Company is delightfully at home with the furniture; the ladies have an intimate acquaintance with the possibilities of a settee.*

or, Mr Popple of Ippleton (Rubens; Gaiety: 20 Nov.1906, p.7):

*Every word can be heard; the only thing lacking is something worth hearing,*

and, Babes in the Woods (Stevens; Royal: 26 Dec.1906, p.5):

*Pantomimes and plum puddings have points in common besides the initial 'P'. Both are mixtures containing rich and dissimilar ingredients; both are the better for keeping. It is also understood that both disagree with many people ...*

Houghton had visited this production on its first night and given it a bad review. He returned six days later to find that the very changes he suggested had in fact been adopted:

*Mental indigestion is avoided by a briefer and more carefully assorted feast. (1 Jan.1907, p.5).*

His view of the acting was similarly handled. For example, in Sheridan's School for Scandal (Gaiety: 4 April 1907, p.7) he succinctly found fault with the poor acting which blurred the play's "fine strokes": it was like "taking the proof of an etching from the plate on blotting paper." Acting was again rebuffed in The Light that Failed (adapted; Prince's: 20 March 1908, p.14):

*Such acting is like varnish on a cheap wallpaper - a preservative against the disintegrating action of critical breezes.*

A look at Grundy's A Fool's Paradise (Queen's: 16 July 1907, p.14)

finds a comment describing the play's having "*some didactic value*" in that "*it warns wives against indulging in poisoning*", qualified by the remark that such practices must not be "*so artless that they get found out ...*" Another view of marriage is also to be found in his view of Shakespeare's The Taming of the Shrew (Royal: 28 Nov.1907, p.7):

*Petruchio took advantage of his century; nowadays Katherine would get a separation and do some type-writing for her living.*

Floral imagery is used with great effect in his review of Margaret Halston and Hetty King in Monsieur de Paris (Ramsey and de Cordova; Hippodrome: 16 Nov.1909, p.4.).

*the music-hall show is a bouquet in which the too, too sentimental white heather, the over fantastic orchid, and the unblushing peony are bound together haphazard, [sic] and from which we select and savour the blooms we fancy.*

A final extended metaphor is to be found in his thoughts on the last play review he ever submitted to the M.G.: Wonderful Grandmamma and the Wand of Youth (Chapin; Gaiety: 27 Dec.1912, p.4):

*Wonderful Mr. Chapin! To have the original idea of writing a children's play solely for the children! Unlike Mr. Barrie, who lets fly both barrels, right and left, and brings down both the children and their parents; unlike M. Maeterlinck, who lets fly both barrels and (perhaps) misses with one of them; Mr. Harold Chapin keeps to a single barrel and aims it at the small game. Now, the small game is, after all, the most difficult to hit.*

Book reviews likewise have their share of wit, humour and metaphor. In the Shade (V.Hawtreys; Murray: 8 Dec.1909, p.5) is concerned with "*illdoers*" who assume "*respectability*" after having "*muffled up their skeletons so effectively that not a rattle of its dry bones ever penetrated the cupboard door*".

In his review of Quiller-Couch's Corporal Sam and other Stories (Smith, Elder: 4 May 1910, p.5), Houghton precisely assessed the characterisation and style:

*he sees the statue in the marble but he does not always set it free or disengage it from the mass by chipping off the right bits .... There is little force or sharpness in his careful style, which seems intent on picking its way through the dictionary without ever getting its feet wet.*

Finally, in Mrs. Charles Calvert's Sixty-Eight Years on the Stage (Mills and Boon: 15 Sept. 1911, p.5), Houghton described her husband's career as follows:

*he began all at once to sparkle like the brook in the sunshine, flittering and rippling over the stones, and never, never by any chance slackening into a pool of any deepness.*

If honesty meant living by a standard then Houghton's was high: failure to reach 'professionalism' secured his wrath for writers and actors alike even if the latter were well-established. Thus H.B. Irving's performance in The Lyons Mail (Reade and Taylor; Royal: 26 Sept. 1907, p.7) was denounced as "uninspired" whilst his Hamlet (Prince's: 29 Sept. 1908, p.9) was

*occasionally mannered and unnatural, and there was a suspicion of the elocutionist.*

Forbes-Robertson also failed to come up to the mark along with his company in Othello (Prince's: 21 March 1908, p.9):

*The general acting was tame and undistinguished ... nothing striking was done by any individual, not even Mr. Forbes-Robertson.*

Even the amateur society had its limitations:

*The Garrick Society [Stockport] knows perfectly well that neither it nor any other body of amateurs can hope to give a really competent performance of 'Rosmersholm'. (20 Dec.1907, p.8).*

Indeed,

*Amateur acting justifies itself completely only by the production of non-commercial plays, by the performance of rarely acted masterpieces, by intelligent appreciation of the fine work of men not yet popular, or even by the revival of sound dramas which, for some reason or other, have been unfortunate at gaining favour.*

Even so,

*Some of the actors were too natural in method. There was not enough of deliberate art in their acting; or to put it another way, they did not leave out quite enough of the things they would do in ordinary life". (Stockport: An Enemy of the People, 13 Jan.1909, p.9).*

With authors and playwrights he was particularly exacting; a writer in the role of critic had to be discerning, as Monkhouse once argued:

*You may think of the critic as one who has had the edge taken off his emotions, but he is rather the one who has trained them to the highest pitch .... He may occasionally be less than just to poor stuff that fulfils a useful function of entertainment, but do not believe that he is anxious for the chance to revile or denounce. It is interest that makes good criticisms, and not annoyance ... Speaking as a critic [I] ... shall not willingly extend that sympathy to what is bad in playwriting or in acting, even to gain praise for a catholic taste. (58)*

A look at two events in particular highlights this in Houghton's case. On Tuesday 19 November 1907, his review of Weedon Grossmith's The Night of the Party (Gaiety, p.9) was printed. Many faults were listed and Grossmith reacted immediately. To the editor of The Manchester Guardian (20 Nov.1907, p.5) he wrote

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58. The Manchester Guardian, 23 Jan. 1908, H.C. Vol.A. The debate was on the role of dramatic criticism and held at the Manchester Playgoers' Club.

Sir,

... he [Houghton] seems to thoroughly understand the drunken scenes. Perhaps he has more experience of that side of life .... I shall be pleased if he will write me a play as funny as 'The Night of the Party'. If he will do this I will give him £100 ... down on account of fees. [£2,900 in 1981].

Underneath the letter is added the Editor's note: *"Our critic has not fallen short of the standard of civility and moderation"* which Grossmith accused Houghton of perpetrating. Houghton, it will be recalled (p.72), began The Dear Departed within five months of the above. However, possibly out of retaliation but probably out of consistency, Houghton (in the very month he began The Dear Departed) visited the Theatre Royal to review Billy Rotterford's Descent by R. Lascelles (14 April 1908, p.9) and wrote that the playwright "was concerned with what may be described as quite a new development of the drama" and concluded: "really one almost hopes that the new path will turn out to be a cul-de-sac". Robert Lascelles proved to be the pseudonym of Weedon Grossmith.<sup>(59)</sup> To cap it all Houghton was then asked to review Piano and I : Further Reminiscences, by George Grossmith (Arrowsmith, 1910), the brother of Weedon.<sup>(60)</sup> The review exceeded 1,200 words (28 March 1910, p.10) and ended, "it is careless, disjointed, and open to criticism from many sides ..." Houghton was paid £2.2.6 (£60 in 1981) for the article.

A similar type of argument was to appear again. This time it was with Hall Caine who had two of his plays reviewed successively at the Prince's Theatre on 27 and 28 September 1910 by Houghton. One was The Eternal

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59. See A.Nicoll, English Drama 1900-1930, op.cit. p.692.

60. O.C.T. p.418.

Question (p.7) and the other The Bishop's Son (p.6). Both reviews were critical of Caine; they also provide a useful insight into Houghton's view of the drama of the period. Houghton saw plays "nowadays" as being of two sorts: dramatic; that is in which people do things and the dialogue is used to explain why they do them. Characters must therefore seem real and must account reasonably for their actions. Secondly, discursive; that is in which people do not do anything and which dialogue is used for the purpose of airing assorted views of men and morals. Characters here must discuss matters wittily or originally. The Eternal Question says Houghton, fails to combine the two and fulfils neither:

*As a story it is childish, and as a sermon it is tedious ... none of the characters bears any resemblance to a human being observed from life; that not one of the things they do is at all credible; that few of the things they say are expressed in reasonable or natural phrases.*

Of The Bishop's Son he accused Caine of raising

*Such vast superstructures of emotion upon entirely inadequate grounds"*

and condemns his misleading the spectators:

*he must be consciously playing upon the stupidity of a certain portion of the public. And in this it is not for criticism to afford him any assistance.*

Caine replied immediately in the columns of an unidentified paper.<sup>(61)</sup>

Brighouse tells us the protest was "against the Guardian's putting one dramatist in a position to decry the wares of another."<sup>(62)</sup>

Brighouse, however, does reprint the entire text of Houghton's reply taken from that same unidentified paper.<sup>(63)</sup> I will merely select

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61. Introduction, p.xxviii. Brighouse gives no details, however.

62. ibid.

63. ibid. pp.xxviii - xxx.

the most appropriate sections:

*He [Hall Caine] puts on one side all questions of the aesthetic value of his plays and of my criticisms of his plays .... in any case, his letter ... raises a larger issue which has been debated frequently, and which is still unsettled. May a man who is doing creative literary work of his own sit in judgment upon the work of other men? In my opinion he may, provided he made no attempt to conceal his identity (64) .... It will be found ... that most of both the dramatic criticisms and novel reviews appearing in the better sort of journal in this country are written by people who write books and plays themselves .... Mr Hall Caine, when adversely criticised in the Times two or three years ago, referred to Mr. A.B. Walkley in a pungent phrase which left no doubt of his contempt for the opinions of a critic who was not a creative artist as well. Now, Mr. Caine objects to being criticised by me because I do write plays .... [he] objects to criticism of any sort, like the famous actress who said that gross flattery was quite good enough for her.*

Houghton concluded characteristically: *"Let us hope that we shall both do well out of the present correspondence"*.

Hall Caine did not reply.<sup>(65)</sup> This is perhaps not surprising since A.B. Walkley (1855-1926), the dramatic critic of The Times (1900-26) who had said of the critic that he was *"a sedentary person with a literary bias. His instinct is to bring to the play the calm lotus-eating mind with which he day-dreams over a book,"*<sup>(66)</sup> had a well-established reputation. William Archer regarded him as having a *"wide knowledge, alert perception, gaiety and lightness of touch"*.<sup>(67)</sup>

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64. Houghton always initialled his articles (other than Miscellany) after the style of the paper's better known writers, e.g. A.N.M. (Monkhouse); C.E.M. (Montague); A.S.W. (Wallace). His were S.H.

65. Introduction, p.xxx.

66. Quoted in O.C.T. p.995.

67. Charles Archer, William Archer : Life, Works and Friendships, Allen and Unwin, 1931, p.139.



Indeed, along with Archer and Shaw, he was regarded as one of "*the three Musketeers of dramatic criticism*".<sup>(68)</sup> Also, other publications tended to side with Houghton. For example, the Umpire (2 Oct. 1910) defending Houghton noted: "*certainly it seems a unique position, though I don't know that there should necessarily be bias imputed.*" It concluded, significantly, that "*Mr. Hall Caine is very sore about it, and, as usual, his wrath makes for publicity.*"<sup>(69)</sup> Finally, Houghton's closing sentence above, whilst humorous, was also literal as his plays Independent Means and The Master of the House were running at the Gaiety at the same period.<sup>(70)</sup> His best play to date was also being prepared for production at the Gaiety: The Younger Generation (See Ch.5.).

Interestingly, an incident has come to light which turns the tables and shows Houghton not only on the receiving end but reacting adversely. On Sunday 16 June 1912 Hindle Wakes, Houghton's most famous play, was staged for the very first time (and in London) by the Incorporated Stage Society.<sup>(71)</sup> It starred the Gaiety's well-known and much respected cast: Charles Bibby, J. Vernon Bryant, Hilda Davies Daisy England, Edyth Goodall, Ada King, Edward Landor, Herbert Lomas and Sybil Thorndike. It was directed by Lewis Casson. R.H. Grotton reviewed it for the M.G. and wired the review to Manchester for inclusion in the next day's paper:

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68. William Archer, op.cit. p.219.

69. H.C. Vol.E.

70. Pogson, p.201. The latter was being staged for the first time.

71. See Ch.8. for full details.

*The fault of the play was that it had rather too many expected moments and a tendency to underline situations and lighter passages. The plot ... [is] ... familiar .... [and] some passages [are] of unnecessary force .... (18 June 1912, H.C. Vol.I).*

Houghton appears to have taken offence to this viewpoint and informed James Bone, the London editor,<sup>(72)</sup> of his indignation. Shortly afterwards Bone wrote to Monkhouse in Manchester:

54 Fleet St,  
22 July 1912.

*My dear Monkhouse,*

*You will see today that I did what I could in the way of booming Houghton, but the position is very difficult, and I do not honestly see what he [Houghton] expects us to do. When his play appeared, Grotton, our only critic who is a member of the Stage Society, dealt with it in his own way ... took a certain view, and surely Houghton would be the last man in the world to suggest that theatrical critics should be influenced from the office. He has been a theatrical critic himself, and I think he would have been very astonished if he had been told that the "M.G." wanted somebody or other boomed in his notices. Of course, a letter like this from me to you is comical, for I know that you feel as I do in the matter. Houghton is getting enthusiastic notices from the London papers and fairly good houses, and is full of success, so I think he, if anyone, might take critical notices of his play in the right spirit. I have not seen it yet, but intend to try this week.*

Yours ever,  
J. Bone. <sup>(73)</sup>

Bone's article (again wired from London for Monday 22 July 1912, p.8.) was headed: 'Mr. Stanley Houghton's success':

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72. Recently appointed. On Bone's ninetieth birthday messages were received by him from Harold Macmillan, Hugh Gaitskell, Jo Grimmond, H.M. The Queen and President Kennedy - see D. Ayerst, op.cit. p.568.

73. A.N.M. 12.

*The event of last week in the theatre .... Mr Houghton had an extraordinarily encouraging reception in the London newspapers, which, one might venture to say, are rather more to be trusted in their likes than dislikes. Although it has come at a time of the year when the theatre public of London largely consists of people visiting the capital with the intention of being able to say when they come home that they had seen the big London successes ... the audiences at the Playhouse are good and extremely enthusiastic.*

Bone makes no comment about the play itself, however: as he stated above he had not yet seen it.

To balance Houghton's criticisms in the M.G. it would now be fair to look at some favourable reviews. The praise he lavished on 'successful' plays and books was equal to the aforementioned fastidiousness. Of the Vendrenne-Barker Company in Shaw's Man and Superman (Prince's: 8 Dec. 1908, p.7.) he exalted "*the precision with which they subordinate themselves to the author's intention*" which he contended was "*really remarkable*".

Of Lords and Masters by J. Byrne (Gaiety: 23 May 1911, p.16.) he said:

*The dialogue is sparse; compressed into a sort of shorthand, it remains absolutely natural but newly charged with meaning. Penetrating things are said - things that probe a soul as the ray of a dark lantern, suddenly revealed, probes a dim corner. The outer skin of ordinary speech is torn away and something unfamiliar is laid bare - something you never suspected at all.*

Of the actress in it, Irene Rooke, he noted that,

*everything [she] touches turns to gold; she seems to comprehend parts so completely.*

Brighouse quotes in full three other pieces of praise given "*with generosity*": Romeo and Juliet (Princes : 22 May 1912, p.7.); Wrack

by Maurice Drake (Duckworth, 23 Feb.1910, p.5), and The Bracknells by Forrest Reid (E.Arnold, 18 Oct. 1911, p.5).<sup>(74)</sup>

One particularly favourable review lends itself to further consideration. Brighthouse tells us that Houghton, once impressed by a work "*sang everywhere [its] ... praises*".<sup>(75)</sup> This praise became almost a sponsorship for C.A. Forrest whom Houghton knew not only as a hockey player but also as a Swan Club member.<sup>(76)</sup> He wrote several novels<sup>(77)</sup> and five plays<sup>(78)</sup> and Brighthouse dedicated the first edition of Hobson's Choice in England to him.<sup>(79)</sup> His first play, (one-act) was The Shepherd and on completion he asked Houghton's opinion of it. This he got plus, at Houghton's instigation, the play's acceptance for production, first at the Liverpool Repertory Theatre and then later at the Gaiety (30 Sept.1912). What is more, Houghton even went to review it on its opening night at Liverpool for the M.G. It was a very favourable review:

*there are passages where things are left unsaid  
because there are no words for them; the feeling  
... is, in truth, too deep for words.*

or, put metaphorically,

*There is no attempt to transform the smock into a  
fine brocade. (12 March 1912, p.8)*

Brighthouse records that Houghton did a similar thing for a play by a

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74. Introduction, pp.xxxi-xxxiii; xxxiii-xxxv; xxxv-xxxvii respectively.

75. *ibid.* p.xxxvii.

76. Brighthouse does not mention Forrest as a member in his Introduction but does in What I have had, *op.cit.* p.41.

77. *ibid.* p.46.

78. A.Nicoll, English Drama 1900-1930, *op.cit.* pp.650-51.

79. Hobson's Choice, Constable, 1916, p.2.

journalist from Manchester, J.F. Haylock, which eventually accompanied Hindle Wakes, as a curtain-raiser, on tour.<sup>(80)</sup> For a man of Houghton's fame at that time it was remarkable that he should find the time he did for such benevolence. It is for reasons like this that one is inclined to completely disagree with Gerald Cumberland's view of the Forrest episode above:

*Though the contrary has often been stated, Houghton did not, I believe, take much interest in anybody's work except his own. He patronised a young bank clerk, Charles Forrest, who had written a promising little play that was subsequently, by Houghton's recommendation, I believe, given in Manchester and Liverpool; but when he came in contact with work that was, in many respects, superior to his own, he was airily superior and supercilious. He once asked to see a blank-verse play of my own that was given at the Manchester Gaiety, but as I was aware that he knew as much of blank verse as I do of comic sections - which is nothing at all - I refrained from passing on my MS to him. In other men's work he looked for faults; in his own he found perfection.*<sup>(81)</sup>

A look at Houghton's Shakesperian reviews will show that he knew a good deal about blank-verse. He also criticised his own plays (as noted earlier) and was to continue to do so. Finally, even after he became an established playwright, his interest in other writers never waned:

*In London, after his chance had come, he would continually cry in the market-place the merits of others of the 'Manchester School',<sup>(82)</sup> even in the ears of managements who had his own plays under consideration. People, too, who were trying their hands at writing got into the habit of sending him plays for criticism, which always was ungrudgingly and helpfully given.*<sup>(83)</sup>

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80. Economising, first performed at Ashton-under-Lyme, 3 March 1913 and later changed to Economic Pressure. Apparently his only play. See A.Nicoll, op.cit. p.713.
81. Set Down in Malice, op.cit. p.66. It has not been possible to establish the title of Cumberland's blank-verse play.
82. For a list of names see Ch.3. fn.152.
83. Introduction, p.xxxvii.

This is surely not the behaviour of an unfeeling egocentric.

Criticism for Houghton is probably best summed up by Shaw, a summary Houghton may well have read:

*Criticism is not only medicinally salutary: it has positive popular attractions in its cruelty, its gladiatorship, and the gratification given to envy by its attacks on the great, and to enthusiasm by its praises. It may say things which many would like to say, but dare not, and indeed for want of skill could not even if they durst. Its iconoclasm, seditions, and blasphemies, if well turned, tickle those whom they shock. (84)*

Houghton's analysis of the effective drama of his period has already been referred to as being of two types (excluding of course melodrama, and music-hall): dramatic and discursive (see p.122 supra). From November 1909 his own drama became mainly the former although other characteristics were attached as will be seen later. Consequently, any play that purported to be solely of this type had a quality to live up to and Houghton's criticism of those that did not tell us much about the structures of his own plays. Thus, in his review of Shaw's Arms and the Man (Gaiety: 5 March 1912, p.10) he compared its first production (1894) with its latest and concluded that the play, because of its content and style, had now lost its effect:

*It is an eternal truth that human beings (of which theatre audiences are largely composed) perversely persist in preferring a pretty lie to an ugly fact.*

However,

*drama is springing up ... its roots [having] a firmer grip of the soil of realism.*

By realism he meant the situation in which characters seemed natural and accounted naturally for their behaviour. Moreover, their dialogue was a major vehicle explaining and accounting for their actions. Shaw's play was *discursive*: the characters did not do anything and their dialogue was used merely for the purpose of airing assorted views of men and morals. Consequently, the dialogue ought to have been witty or original.

Characters had to act naturally. In Hedda Gabbler (Gaiety: 16 Dec. 1908, p.10) he bitterly complained about the characters' too sombre and too unreal portrayals:

*There should be more definite attempt to show us ordinary human beings talking as natural as the limits of a pretty stilted translation will allow ...*

He dismissed the characters of Paid in Full (Walter; Royal: 30 Nov. 1909, p.7) simply as "puppets jerked by strings", since character-acting depended not only on successful dialogue but also on acting techniques as he well knew. Hence, it is not surprising to find a similar comment elsewhere:

*the acting ... is more or less bad all round; the difference between individuals being that some are bad because they know very little about stage tricks, and others because they know too much."*  
(Hermann and Wills, Claudian; Royal: 18 May 1909, p.7)

Other examples spring readily to hand: The Freedom of Suzanne (Gordon-Lennox; Gaiety: 12 March 1907, p.7.)

*He has been so absorbed in the praiseworthy exclusion of all that is not sweet and clean that he has unfortunately excluded nearly everything that would have made the play probable.*

Houghton measured successful dialogue by a very simple formula: if a person, on leaving the theatre said to himself "that's what I thought"

then it is not too successful. If, however, he left saying "*I never thought of that*" then it is very successful.<sup>(85)</sup> What is more, any thesis or social commentary made must be built into and form part of the structure of the play. In Diana of Dobson's (Hamilton; Royal: 10 Nov.1908, p.7) he takes the themes and plot apart: the play is disjointed

*with a series of diatribes directed against certain aspects of society, ... without any bearing upon the action of the drama ... the thesis should form an essential part of the drama, and [here] it does not.*

And just to show consistency, as well as drive home the point further, he stated in another review of the play (Royal: 4 May 1909, p.10) that it

*provides spectators with the agreeable triple sensation of (a) witnessing something respectably daring in the discreet disrobing scene, (b) experiencing the novelty of applauding ideas and a spirited criticism of accepted hollow conventions, and (c) feeling at the same time on perfectly safe sentimental ground and sitting comfortably with the pleasing certainty that the rules of the game are going to be observed without any nonsense about unhappy endings ...*

Houghton also maintained that a play need not necessarily propound moral themes; it could be purely entertainment:

*It is of course true that the artist should have no ethical sympathies; that a work of art should not concern itself with pushing home a moral point. (Brewster's Millions: Smith and Ongley, Prince's; 27 April 1909, p.14).*

For Houghton then 'Old Comedy' and 'New Comedy' had their respective places in drama. The former had qualities he admired: "*these things are precious and worthy to be preserved*", but it was artificial; it had no place in modern drama. In his review of David Garrick (T.W. Robertson; Prince's: 26 April 1910, p.14), from which the above

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85. A paraphrase of Houghton's review of The Walls of Jericho (Sutro; Prince's: 24 Sept. 1907, p.7)



quotation is taken, he expanded upon this artificiality:

*You note the handling of the set speech, and its gradually swelling volume, its climax, and its final falling cadence; and at the end your hands steal to meet each other and render the applause which follows as natural as the funeral baked-meats the ceremony. You admire the cool insouciance of the comedy passages, delivered with an absolute certainty of their telling; and if they don't, you admire the perfect assurance with which they are carried off. The superb assumption of the attention of the audience; the nerve which floats the actor over a preposterous phrase; the conceit (if you like) which swells him out large enough to fill the most inflated image ...*

Houghton had one other use for the M.G. - a facility he only used twice and both with noteworthy effects. The first concerned a fierce public debate being held by several papers about the Gaiety Theatre's drinks' licence. After repeated attempts Miss Horniman, in February 1911, made another bid to gain it - her fourth. He joined in the furore but only from the standpoint of personal freedom and choice rather than for any pro or anti temperance feelings. In a letter to The Manchester Guardian he argued his case logically and succinctly. Brighouse includes a third of the letter in The Works (Vol.I, p.xv) and concludes with the words: "*The Gaiety got its licence*". However, a closer examination of the newspaper reveals somewhat more. Not only were there ten letters printed in that edition (1 March 1911) but they were given a special place on the back page along with a headline (normally letters to the editor appeared inside). Moreover, Houghton's was dated 28 February, thus timing its arrival precisely as 1 March was the very day the Watch Committee was due to meet to give its final decision. One of the other letters was also dated 28 February, was

almost the same length and developed the same theme: it was signed by Harold Brighthouse.

The second occasion was perhaps more important. Again it stemmed from Houghton's belief in freedom of choice. It concerned the City Council and its banning of H.G. Wells's The New Machiavelli (1911) from the library shelves. The M.G. carried a report on 6 April 1911 (p.3). On Saturday 8 April Houghton's letter appeared in which he argued cohesively and coherently against the decision. He proclaimed Wells as "*one of the greatest of our living novelists.*" (p.12) On Tuesday 11 April Arnold Bennett arrived in Manchester "*to stay with Mair [of the M.G.]*" where he "*met the usual fine crowd, and also Stanley Houghton, who impressed [him]*".<sup>(86)</sup> In all probability Houghton raised the issue with Bennett and the others (since Houghton's letter had been the very first to complain) because the very next morning Arnold Bennett voiced his support in the letters' column of the paper (p.12). There then followed several days of letters on the subject, including on 14 April one from Harold Brighthouse (p.6). By 18 April Councillor W. Phillips wrote saying that he would move a resolution that "*The New Machiavelli* be purchased" (p.12). However, a report on the 20<sup>th</sup> noted that the motion did not have a seconder and was therefore deferred. A look at the Minutes of General Committee (Aug.1908-Sept.1912) further reveals that on 26 April Councillor Phillips' move to purchase a copy of the book for each branch library was (apparently yet again) not seconded

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86. Newman Flower (Ed.), The Journals of Arnold Bennett 1911-21, Cassell, 1932, p.5.

and it was referred to a sub-committee for further consideration.<sup>(87)</sup>  
The next known meeting was held on 24 May 1911 when a report of a letter from the Manchester and Salford Independent Labour Party Federation was read out. It began: *"This Federation strongly protests against the banning of Mr. H.G. Wells's book 'The New Machiavelli'."*<sup>(88)</sup>  
Unfortunately, it has proved impossible to trace the eventual outcome of the event. However, the episode is of value because it shows that Houghton not only read Wells but also respected his work and this point will be of importance later (in Chs. 8 and 11) when another of Wells's books will play an important role - Ann Veronica (1909).

It now remains, for the purposes of this thesis, to mention here two other personalities of significance: one was influential in the life of Houghton whilst the other, who knew Houghton, provides some valuable insights and corroborates some aspects of the playwright's movements. Both have been referred to at various points in earlier chapters: A.N. Monkhouse and Dixon Scott.

Allan Noble Monkhouse (1858-1936) began his working life as a yarn agent. In 1902 The Manchester Guardian employed him full-time at a salary of £500 (£15,000 in 1981) to write its commercial reports.<sup>(89)</sup>  
Prior to this, however, he had (for some six years) contributed articles on a part-time basis on books and golf. His permanent appointment

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87. Held in Manchester Central Reference Library (Archives). Pages are not numbered.  
88. *ibid.*  
89. D. Ayerst, *op.cit.* p.335.

still permitted book-reviewing. Eventually he became the literary editor, a title he never allowed himself to be called: "*There's no such person.*"<sup>(90)</sup> Such modesty was not false; Monkhouse never fully liked the limelight. Some tried to get him to agree to an autobiography but "*in vain .... It pleased him to be asked but he said 'No'.*"<sup>(91)</sup> James Agate puts it in perspective:

*He shunned advertisement but did not despise a modest fame.*<sup>(92)</sup>

In 1923 Thomas Moulton (the editor of Voices in Poetry and Prose) wrote to Monkhouse:

*I was delighted this afternoon to learn from Jonathan Cape that he is publishing your new novel in Spring. [Marmaduke, 1924]. I wonder if you would permit me to do a short study of you in the Bookman, about the time publication is due? Adcock (the editor) told me some time ago that nobody in all his experience had shown such reluctance to have his photograph and a few biographical details made public as you once did.*<sup>(93)</sup>

Monkhouse wrote several novels and some eighteen plays<sup>(94)</sup> in between his work for the M.G. (which he never left until retirement). In 1929 he received the degree of D.Litt. from the University of Manchester.<sup>(95)</sup>

Like Houghton, one of the major themes of his plays (and novels) was the conflict between the generations and his siding with the younger.

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90. D.Ayerst, op.cit. p.333.  
91. Brighouse to Houlton, 27 April 1953, in Brighouse Collection.  
92. Ego 2 : Being more of the autobiography of James Agate, Gollancz, 1936, pp.317-18.  
93. 10 Dec. 1923, ANM 1. It would appear that he declined since only a review of Marmaduke appeared in The Bookman, March 1924, No. 390, Vol.LXV, p.323.  
94. A. Nicoll, English Drama 1900-30, pp.839-840.  
95. The Times, 13th July 1936: an appreciation by Agate. Located in Manchester Central Reference Library, Local History : Biography No. 130.

His talent took some time to be recognised, however. One of the first to spot this was Edward Garnett (1868-1937):

*You must be content to be recognised as one of the revolutionary forces in Manchester".* (96)

Such a statement was not made unthinkingly: Garnett himself was equally talented. He was the son of Richard Garnett, critic and biographer, and assistant keeper of books at the British Museum and husband of Constance, translator of Dostoevsky and other Russian authors, "*who did so much to make Russian literature known in the English-speaking world*". (97) Interestingly, Garnett was indirectly connected with The Manchester Guardian: his grand-uncle, Jeremiah, helped J.E. Taylor to launch the paper. (98) Indeed,

*The cultural and intellectual foundation of the Garnetts was laid in the North of England.* (99)

Edward Garnett<sup>was</sup> not only a close friend of William Archer but also attended school with C.E. Montague. (100) He wrote several plays, (101) the most noteworthy being The Breaking Point (1907), a play which, "*directed against the male egotism of ... unseeing and self-willed men*" (Preface to Play), was denied a licence by the Lord Chamberlain but was produced by The Incorporated Stage Society (102) (which later produced Hindle Wakes). Garnett's son David neatly summed up his father's role in literature:

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96. Garnett to Monkhouse, 20 March 1912, ANM 10.

97. Catherine Dupré, John Galsworthy : a biography, Collins, 1976, p.76. She also translated Chekhov: "*Many productions were based on her texts*". (see A.Nicoll, op.cit. p.661).

98. George Jefferson, Edward Garnett : a life in literature, Cape, 1982, p.5.

99. *ibid.*

100. *ibid.* pp.20 and 179 respectively.

101. A.Nicoll, op.cit. pp.661-662.

102. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis: 'St. John Hankin and the drama of the Stage Society and Court Theatre' by W.H. Phillips, Indiana Univ. 1972, p.18.

*the discovery of talent in unknown writers ...  
his own mission in life was to discover the  
genius and to fight for his recognition. (103)*

Ford Madox Ford dubbed him "*London's literary - if Nonconformist - Pope.*"<sup>(104)</sup> In 1936 Stanley Baldwin nominated him for the Companion of Honour medal and some months later the University of Manchester offered to bestow upon him the degree of Doctor of Letters. He refused both.<sup>(105)</sup> His influence, however, was deep: he both advised and inspired confidence in such literary figures as (alphabetically): H.E. Bates, Arnold Bennett, Joseph Conrad, E.M. Forster, John Galsworthy, James Joyce, D.H. Lawrence, T.E. Lawrence, Somerset Maugham, H.G. Wells, W.B. Yeats.<sup>(106)</sup>

It was little wonder then that he of all people should have persuaded Monkhouse to allow him to write at length an appreciation for John Middleton Murry's The Adelphi.<sup>(107)</sup> He began by stating that Monkhouse was a contemporary talent who had received little recognition despite having great merits. His work "*often tragic*" was "*lit by ironical lights*" and was "*devoid of orthodox comments and sentimental solutions*" and had a "*spiritual freshness*" full of "*intellectual integrity*". (p.1). These qualities, as seen, were those admired by Houghton in other writers. For example

*A good deal of Mr. Shaw's and Mr. Galsworthy's drama will then 'date', because of the propaganda of social ideas infused in the exposition; but Mr. Monkhouse's plays, free from propaganda, rest almost entirely on the dramatic disclosure of people's characteristic behaviour and their relations one with another. (p.3)*

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103. David Garnett, The Golden Echo, Chatto and Windus, 1953, p.3.

104. Catherine Dupré, op.cit. p.76.

105. Edward Garnett : a life in literature, op.cit. p.282.

106. ibid. passim.

107. A carbon copy of the typescript is lodged in ANM 10, dated 2 Feb. 1924. I have traced its publication in the magazine to Dec. 1924, pp.1092-1101.

compares with Houghton's view above (p.130). Garnett's analysis continues:

*through the mouths of his leading characters ... [he seeks] the truth with quiet or witty or razor-like trenchancy so that the tissues of the situation, often involving moral or spiritual dilemma, are shredded out before our eyes. (p.5)*

What is more,

*the characters' analytic exposure of one another's natures through the duel of wits on the stage, in stripping away illusions, heightens [his] drama. One feels this strongly ... in Mary Broome ... [where] the situation is one of ironic comedy, [with] Leonard's humorous advertisement of his own worthlessness forcing everybody into paroxysms of indignant virtue, while the candid single-mindedness of Mary appears lively and refreshing amid these bourgeois people. (p.6)*

In conclusion, Monkhouse had succeeded in

*the coolest way, by exposing all the motives and the workings of the minds of this little group of people ... [he] has ripped open most dexterously the stuffing of the bourgeois ideal and contrasted it with the simpler, more direct working-class ethic. (p.7)*

Such an analysis bears noting because some twelve years earlier Houghton had already (privately) said the same things. In a letter to Monkhouse he wrote:

2 Athol Road  
Alexandra Park

October 15 1911

*My dear Monkhouse,*

*I had on Saturday night <sup>(108)</sup> the pleasure of seeing MARY BROOME well acted before a large house, <sup>(109)</sup> which enjoyed the piece immensely .... [Some of the audience] seemed to be a little uncertain whether they ought to be shocked, and ... undoubtedly suppressed their pleasurable emotions lest their friends should*

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108. i.e. Oct.14. The play had just completed its first week's showing at the Gaiety.

109. That week the play grossed £345.17.6 (£9,337 in 1981) of which Monkhouse received £17.6.0 (£460 in 1981). See 'Weekly Summary' in Manchester Central Reference Library, Local History, No.130.

see them apparently approving of the author's disturbing ideas. After the first act I heard a worthy lady behind me remark, "It's a good thing we didn't bring Phyllis".

I may as well confess that I had been dreading going to the play because I always dread going to see my friends' plays. I feel that I am no use as a liar, and I always wonder in advance what on earth am I to say to them if through my own stupidity or perverseness I happen not to care for their work. For a similar reason when I like a friend's play I prefer to write to him and say so because one is not compelled to do that, and a letter cannot by any chance be construed into a chance compliment forced from one by the accident of a meeting. I had out of MARY BROOME one of the finest and most stimulating entertainments ... that I ever remember having. It was Montague, I think, who called it "one of the Gaiety's happiest adventures" and "one of the most original of modern comedies", and that does exactly as a broad classification of the play .... it struck me that you were not concerned so much with the outsides as the insides of your people - a pretty obvious thing to say of novelists now, but not yet, actually, of dramatists, although Ibsen has been dead a long while. And I thought you were so keen on tearing out the insides that you left the outsides to take care of themselves rather. I don't know quite what I mean, unless it is that you tried to reveal the people by what they said more than by what they did .... The natural result of your method is that you make your comedy astonishingly deep and brilliant, and just a little inhuman. We are concerned in this comedy, as in all comedies doubtless, with the author's view of life; comedy must be a criticism from some point of view, whereas it seems to me that simple drama (110) ought not to be. That is why THE SILVER BOX and STRIFE are admirable comedies, and why JUSTICE is a bad drama, (111) because the author's view is clearly expressed. Therefore I am not disposed to quarrel with your method even if it does seem a little inhuman .... the general impression one

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110. See p.122 supra for a working definition.

111. In November 1910 Houghton had actually taken part in a discussion at the Manchester Playgoers' Club on the topic of Galsworthy's Drama. Houghton argued that "a fair test of great art was that it should cause high emotion to future generations. But Justice dealt with the present system of dealing with crime and when that system was altered the drama would be completely out of date. Mr. Houghton also questioned whether art had anything to do with ethics, and in regard to the solitary confinement scene he maintained that it was not dramatic but like a lantern slide in the middle of a lecture." (Manchester Evening News, 3 Nov. 1910, H.C.VolF.). Indeed, "Art had no concern with ethics, so the moral or didactic purpose must be disregarded when discussing the art of Justice." (Manchester City News, 5 Nov. 1910, *ibid.*) Interestingly, Milton Rosmer, the actor (see p.224 infra) wrote a long letter to The Manchester Guardian (8 Nov. 1910, *ibid.*), repudiating everything Houghton said.



*gets is that you have a burning scorn for most of the persons you have chosen to put on the stage, and that is why the stalls and the circle are uncomfortable; they feel that they would have acted like the people you laugh at, and that therefore you are laughing at them .... The wit of your dialogue is perfectly astonishing.* (112)

Monkhouse's reaction to this letter must have been favourable as their friendship endured. As regards friends reviewing each other's work, it was not the last time Monkhouse was to hear that. John Drinkwater in 1916 wrote to him:

*I think that friends should review each other, since literary friendships are nearly always the direct result of a real understanding of and admiration for a man's work. It is preposterous to suppose that a voice of any authority can be given to work that is bad merely because of personal acquaintance. Silence perhaps, but dishonest praise, no.* (113)

— Houghton's thoughts also five years earlier (see p. 123). Lascelles Abercrombie, a year after Houghton's letter above, also noted similar qualities:

*splendid stuff ... I honestly think it is the best play of its kind in English I have read.* (114) *It seems to me far finer and truer than anything of [Granville] Barker's. Mrs. Timbrell is the first she person in modern English plays (known to me at least) that has any of the real thing in her, as Ibsen's shes always have.* (115)

Of equal significance to this thesis is the postscript attached to the Houghton letter just quoted. It is attached to the main body of the letter (which was typed on quality paper) but on what is almost scrap-paper, making it literally an afterthought, added almost apprehensively:

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112. A N M 12.

113. Drinkwater to Monkhouse, 22 Nov. 1916, A N M 10.

114. At the time Abercrombie was employed as a reader for the Liverpool Rep. Co. This fact will be taken up again (see Ch. 8).

115. Abercrombie to Monkhouse, 2 July 1912, A N M 1.

P.S. I had almost forgotten to tell you that I have been for some time working upon a play called *HINDLE WAKES* about Lancashire people, in which the millowner's son seduces the daughter of one of his employees, and the millowner insists on the young couple marrying. The theme you see is almost identical, only your treatment is comedy and mine is an attempt at simple realistic drama. These cases of thought transference are very curious. There was Darwin and Wallace wasn't there?

Now whilst the implications of the postscripts are very interesting (and will be considered in the Chapter 8), it is the final sentence that is of relevance here. Before saying why it will be necessary to quote one other letter from Houghton to Monkhouse. It follows on from the Daily Mail (3 Dec.1912, H.C. Vol.J.) in which Hamilton Fyfe (playwright and critic) contributed a lengthy article headed 'The New Dramatist - Mr. Stanley Houghton', basing it on a meeting he had with Houghton at a party. The article assessed some of Houghton's plays, including Hindle Wakes. It added:

*In the last year there has come into being a Manchester School of dramatists. Mr. Houghton is its leader so far. Mr. Harold Brighouse ... and Mr. Allan Monkhouse follow him, with several minor writers. (116)*

Houghton was furious with this article and the same day wrote to Monkhouse:

*In today's "Daily Mail" you will find a leader about me, & a column by Hamilton Fyfe about you, me & Brighouse. I hope you'll believe I never said such foolish things as he reports. I never saw a column fuller of inaccuracies. And that stupid passage about you & Brighouse "following" me. I lead only in one sense;*

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116. Reference has already been made to the Manchester School of Dramatists (see Ch.3 fn.152). A detailed study of this group is not possible within the confines of the thesis. However, work has been done on this topic. For example: T. Pratt, The Manchester Dramatists, Sherratt and Hughes, 1914; F.A. Laurie, 'The Manchester School of Dramatists' unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1923, University of Pennsylvania (unfortunately that University is unable to locate it); Marianne Loos, 'The Manchester School in der englischen Dramatik', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1930, University of Innsbruck (it has also proved impossible to obtain this thesis).

*the sense that John the Baptist led Christ; by going in front & announcing the advent of a greater than myself. The private history is as inaccurate as the personal appearance ... (117)*

The implications behind the John the Baptist allusion, and the earlier one to Darwin and Wallace, are important for two reasons. The first is that it highlights a private modesty within Houghton (at the time he was the best known playwright of the three), and also provides a valuable link for any study of The Manchester School of Dramatists (see fn.116). Secondly, it lends credence to a belief only recently made known: it would seem that Houghton was a homosexual. Of the several letters still in existence to Monkhouse it is quite evident that Houghton had a very deep regard for the man. Before quoting some examples two points need to be made. The first concerns his alleged homosexuality. Professor Gardner in his letter to me (see p.5 ) added that Houghton was his mother's favourite cousin:

*she was exceedingly friendly with him - harmlessly,  
I should add, for, he was gay.*

Apparently another of Houghton's cousins, Capt. H.J. Pullein Thompson (the brother of the above lady), was privy to the fact. The knowledge was only passed on to the children when they became old enough to understand.<sup>(118)</sup> The playwright Denis Cannan (née Pullein Thompson)<sup>(119)</sup> vaguely recalls being told by the actress Marie Löhr (1890-1975) of a scandal involving Houghton in Paris. His recollection is very faint

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117. 3 Dec.1912, ANM 12.

118. I am grateful to Mrs. Diana Farr, daughter of Capt. Pullein Thompson (and author of Gilbert Cannan: A Georgian Prodigy Chatto and Windus, 1978) for this information.

119. b.1919, brother of Mrs. Diana Farr. He has written some twelve plays and several screenplays including that for 'A High Wind in Jamaica': see J.Vinson (Ed), Contemporary Dramatists, St.James Press, 1977 (2<sup>nd</sup> Edit.), p.136.

save to say that Miss Löhr "raised her eyebrows in disgust".<sup>(120)</sup>

Other than the above there is no formal evidence to back the allegation but an awareness of its possibility does help to explain not only Houghton's devotion to Monkhouse but also provides another reason for his eventual residency in Paris (see Ch.10). Indeed, from Paris came the following letter to Monkhouse (who was married and twenty-three years older than Houghton).:

*It isn't very long since I saw you, but it seems a long time because such a lot of things have happened in it. Of course I keep hearing you talk in your leaders & notices & reviews; for the M.G. comes every day .... But I should like to have a note every now and then.*

He continues by describing his new flat:

*I wish you could see it. Don't you think you could come over & stay with me for a few days? My visiting list ahead is very meagre .... Cut the Exchange & dash over here next week. I can give you a nice room with a bed of monastic austerity which made Payne laugh yesterday - he called it a Tolstoyan bed .... You could even work if you want to dash off a play in the time. You should have a room where you might be quite secluded for as much of the day as you wanted. You may wonder where I find all these rooms, since I have only three, but I'd show you if you came. I should work too, if you did .... Ever. yours sincerely ... (121)*

It would seem that Monkhouse did eventually go in June 1913 and indeed invited along the other man of importance - Dixon Scott.

Unfortunately Scott was unable to accept the offer and lamented:

*"We'd have seen S.H. (very likely)."*<sup>(122)</sup>

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120. Telephone conversation between myself and Mr. Cannan, 17 Nov. 1982.

121. 24 May 1913, A N M 10.

122. Scott to Monkhouse, 2 June 1913 in Mary McCrossan (Ed) The Letters of W. Dixon Scott, Herbert Joseph, 1932, p.229. Not all of his letters are printed and some are edited, however. (See Ch.10, p.344 and Ch.13, p.402)

Walter Dixon Scott (1881-1915), a blood relative of the writer Walter Scott,<sup>(123)</sup> was regarded by Lascelles Abercrombie as "*one of the most remarkable personalities of his time.*"<sup>(124)</sup> From Liverpool, he was initially a bank-clerk but did part-time review work and essays for the Liverpool Courier.<sup>(125)</sup> He later lectured in English at Liverpool University and there was held in high regard by Professor Elton.<sup>(126)</sup> He then reviewed for The Manchester Guardian and submitted some back-page articles.<sup>(127)</sup> He also wrote for Country Life and The Bookman (the latter being a series of monographs on Bennett; Henry James; Kipling; Shaw; Wells).<sup>(128)</sup> His critical faculty was renowned by those who knew him: "*a truly creative mind ... [with] peculiar powers of analysis and discrimination.*"<sup>(129)</sup> He died of dysentery on an army hospital ship during the First World War.<sup>(130)</sup>

Having established Scott's reputation and relevance it is now pertinent to quote from a letter of his which fits in with the earlier point concerning Houghton's admiration for Monkhouse. Scott was able, in confidence, to tell the latter that Houghton was

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123. Mary McCrossan (Ed), The Letters of W. Dixon Scott, op.cit. p.xv. The typescript is located in Manchester Central Reference Library Archives, Ref.391. (See also Ch.13, p.402 infra).
124. *ibid.* p.VII.
125. *ibid.* p.XV.
126. Max Beerbohm's Introduction to Dixon Scott's posthumous Men of Letters, Hodder and Stoughton, 1916, p.iX.
127. The Letters of W. Dixon Scott, op.cit. p.XVI.
128. *ibid.* pp.XVI-XVIII.
129. Lascelles Abercrombie, *ibid.* p.xii.
130. The Letters of W. Dixon Scott, op.cit. p.XVII. Many of his war-time letters are in A N M 7,

*a little worried ... over your attitude towards him: he feels you look at him "reproachfully" and it makes him sad. He's beautifully in love with you and perhaps a reproachful air is just exactly what's best for him. (131)*

This feeling for Monkhouse may have some bearing on the following letter which, though undated, must be about June 1913. (The "indiscretion" and the need "to forgive" have proved impossible to put into context):

*6 Rue Bobillot,  
Place d'Italie  
Paris.*

*Dear Monkhouse,*

*No: you weren't indiscreet, and your letter gave enormous joy to the company, at least the first part - which I read aloud. When it was read, a young American who'd just come over from the States said "Who wrote that?" and I said "Monkhouse", and he said "That the man who wrote 'Mary Broome'?"*

*"Yes. Do you know it?"*

*"Know it! Why, I was the first man in New York with a copy!"*

*So your indiscretion - (your letter I mean) has found you out.*

*It is good of you & Mrs. Monkhouse to forgive me .... I'll try & call at your hotel at 12'o on Tuesday. (132)*

The correspondence between the two continued right up to and through Houghton's illness. During Houghton's three months in hospital (in Venice) he received Monkhouse's letters. Their solace was comforting:

*Your letters are wonderfully welcome but I can't reply to them as I ought. (133)*

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131. 13 January 1913 (postmark), A N M 6.

132. A N M 12.

133. n.d. but c. 20 Sept. 1913, A N M 10. See Ch.12 for more details.

In fairness to Monkhouse it is worth noting that several others also held him in high-regard. Francis Brett Young (1884-1954) the novelist, poet and playwright highly rated his criticism as *"one of the soundest influences on English Literature for the last twenty years."*<sup>(134)</sup> Gordon Bottomley (1874-1948) poet and verse-playwright (*"an important figure in the evolution of modern poetic drama"*)<sup>(135)</sup> regarded him as *"super-human"*<sup>(136)</sup> whilst Walter De La Mare praised his weekly articles.<sup>(137)</sup> Arnold Bennett added that *"perhaps your devastating modesty does not help you to realise that you are constantly in the thoughts of us up here."*<sup>(138)</sup> John Masefield, perhaps, gave him the greatest accolade: *"I like to think of you as a sort of Balzac, creating an imaginative Manchester, in the intervals of business."*<sup>(139)</sup> J.E. Agate confided in him that *"I look up to you ... I can't help my manner being cocky (it's very largely nervousness) but ... I do enormously look up to you & respect and like you"*.<sup>(140)</sup> His employer, C.P. Scott, likewise had a respect: *"[I] would like to raise it [salary] as from the beginning of the new year to £600 [£16,800 in 1981]. You know how much we value your work & may I say also your personal association with the paper. There could be no better colleague."*<sup>(141)</sup> So too did C.P. Scott's son:

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- 134. Arthur Ransome told Monkhouse this in a letter dated 3 Oct. 1931, A N M 1. The letter continues: *"Brett Young is not a man who scatters his praise at large."*
  - 135. O.C.T. p.119.
  - 136. Bottomley to Monkhouse, 1 March 1929, A N M 1.
  - 137. Eric Gillett told Monkhouse this in a letter dated 14 March 1932, A N M 1. This was probably referring to the 'Books and Bookmen' articles in the Saturday editions of the M.G.
  - 138. 25 Oct. 1918, A N M 1.
  - 139. 17 March 1907, *ibid.*
  - 140. 31 March 1914 (postmark), A N M 13.
  - 141. 30 Dec. 1908, A N M 14.

*When I first came to the paper, I looked up to you as one of its great pillars and ornaments. You are one of the people who typify the paper, who manage to be most distinctive in themselves and yet most definite a part of the paper. Montague was like that ... I have an admiration amounting to reverence both for yourself personally and for your work. (142)*

Despite such high praise he remained an approachable man: a true confidant. Many examples of this can be found in his letters but one published comment will suffice as a generalisation:

*Nobody ever came away from a 'confab' with Monkhouse without feeling, willy-nilly, that he had been to confession. (143)*

Such was The Manchester Guardian, its staff and its almost complete involvement in the life of Stanley Houghton. It offered him much, both as a writer and as a human being, and remained central to his life as will be seen in succeeding chapters. It would be well, therefore, to conclude this chapter with a little anecdote. It concerns one of Arnold Bennett's visits to The Manchester Guardian's offices, a venture he deeply appreciated.<sup>(144)</sup> On Tuesday 11 April 1911 he recorded the visit referred to earlier (see p.133):

*I went to stay with Mair till Thursday. I met the usual fine crowd, and also Stanley Houghton, who impressed me ... (145)*

If one turns to Gerald Cumberland's book one finds a little more:

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142. Draft letter, 12 July 1931, located in the University of Manchester Archives, ref. A/M82/32d.
143. James Agate, Ego 2, op.cit. p.318.
144. Frank Swinnerton (Ed), The Journals of Arnold Bennett, Penguin, 1954, pp.202-3.
145. Newman Flower (Ed), The Journals of Arnold Bennett 1911-21, op.cit. p.5.



*I remember G.H. Mair giving me an amusing description of a breakfast he gave to Arnold Bennett and Stanley Houghton ... in Manchester ... [Houghton] was young and inexperienced enough to nurse the expectation that the personality of the famous writer would be as impressive as his work ...*

The anecdote continues about the removal of an extraordinarily large trunk from Mair's house by a cabman and Bennett spending "a whole hour" over breakfast discussing it without much feedback from the other two:

*I can imagine Houghton cudgelling his brains to discover [what to say] and Mair saying something witty about it. (146)*

Just how impressed Houghton was may be judged from a remark in later years by Brighouse in connection with Houghton's contemplated career as a novelist (see Ch.11): Houghton's intention was to be Lancashire's Arnold Bennett. (147)

Meanwhile, Houghton continued to work on his plays and was soon to complete a three-act comedy which was not only to achieve great success in Manchester but also in London and thereby enhance his reputation further.

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146. Set Down in Malice, op.cit. pp.69-70.

147. Introduction, p.Iviii.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE YOUNGER GENERATION

By the end of 1909 Houghton's output had reached an impressive level (all written in his spare time): for himself some fourteen plays and for The Manchester Guardian eighty-seven play reviews, nine book reviews, eight Miscellany articles and five special articles.<sup>(1)</sup> His fourteenth play, however, was not only to be his first full length play to achieve a wide success, but it was also to remain his second most successful play after Hindle Wakes.<sup>(2)</sup>

The Younger Generation (3 Acts) was written in November and December 1909 - six months after his last play and almost a year after he had written Independent Means.<sup>(3)</sup> Such a lapse of time, however, was not wasted. As mentioned earlier (p.33) Houghton liked to 'incubate' his ideas. Moreover, he probably also wished to repeat the success achieved in London earlier that summer with The Dear Departed (see Ch.3). He had not been particularly pleased with Independent Means, the last play of his to be professionally acted. He was certainly keen to maintain his standing in Manchester but by now he had also developed a taste for London - a tough market which, having succeeded in once, he wanted to do again only this time with a full-length play. His interest and commercial success in London was later to cause him to seek residence there in 1912 (see Ch.10).

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1. See Appendices. I have excluded The Master of the House, however. (See Ch.6).
  2. Introduction, p.xliii.
  3. *ibid.* pp.xlii-iii.

The play's title had not been an easy one for him to settle on and eventually he had to obtain permission to use it from the playwright Miss Netta Syrett who had originally created it in 1906 for her own one-act play.<sup>(4)</sup> Little did Houghton know that the same title would also lead his family to the High Court in 1931. This will be dealt with towards the end of the chapter. The play's theme, the conflict between the older and younger generations, likewise was not new: it had been dealt with in literature before. The plot is reputed to have been based on actual incidents in the lives of a family Houghton knew well in Manchester but this has not been fully substantiated (see p.27). Indeed, three of the characters reappear in Houghton's unfinished novel - a novel rooted in his home environment (see Ch.11).

Houghton must have sent the play off to the Gaiety not long after its completion because by 29 March 1910 Iden Payne was able to write to him asking him to *"come in and see me some time about THE YOUNGER GENERATION"*.<sup>(5)</sup> It was submitted to the Lord Chamberlain for a licence to be shown at the Gaiety on 21 November 1910.<sup>(6)</sup> The Pall Mall Gazette, a week before the play's first production, anticipated that *"local dramatic critics [would] write at considerable length"* on it. They recommended it as a *"highly individual piece of work"* and predicted that it was *"likely to present rather exceptional controversial possibilities"*.<sup>(7)</sup> The Manchester Evening News<sup>(8)</sup> contented itself with the view that the play was merely a humorous treatment of the theme which Ibsen had

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4. Introduction, p.xlix. See also A. Nicoll, English Drama 1900-1930 op.cit. p.979.
  5. Letter in Stanley Houghton Collection.
  6. L.C.P. Vol.29, No.786. Examiner of Plays' review not available.
  7. 14 Nov.1910, H.C. Vol.F.
  8. 19 Nov.1910, ibid.

developed tragically in The Master Builder (1892).

When the play did open on the above date<sup>(9)</sup> it was well-received and Houghton was accorded the honour of a curtain-call.<sup>(10)</sup> George Mair for the M.G. wrote of the playwright's "sparkling talent for the observation of the surface of a society" with his "keen and entertaining sense of detail".<sup>(11)</sup> He lamented though Houghton's failure to be honest enough to use the name Manchester as the play's location rather than his creation of "Salchester" (a combination, no doubt, of Salford and Manchester). Brighouse highlighted the play's technical success:

*Its form shows Houghton completely master of his craft, no longer to be terrified by technique .... It is compact, incisive, with every word of its entertaining dialogue precisely placed and nicely weighed to bring its meaning home.* (12)

Mair used the epithet "photographic" to describe the power of the play's dialogue, adding that "just such talk would happen between people", and yet such talk, in his opinion, was not original but the result of relying on "a stock of phrases not of their own making, sincerely but mistakenly adapted from the sphere in which they live".<sup>(13)</sup> He then continued to note what he called "disquieting moments". For example, he did not like "the shallow-minded vulgarity of the uncle from abroad" who thought his 'modern' views were better than the "sincere decorum of the father" albeit his too were "shallow-minded". The Era highlighted another:

*Mr. Houghton makes the mistake of commending the idea of a young man's getting drunk occasionally, by way of relief from the pressure of high spirits.* (14)

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9. Pogson, p.202.
  10. The Era, 26 Nov.1910, H.C. Vol.F.
  11. 23 Nov.1910. *ibid.*
  12. Introduction, p.xliv.
  13. M.G. *op.cit.*
  14. 26 Nov.1910, H.C. Vol.F.

Even in London there seemed to be more wariness than praise.

The Standard lauded its *"acute characterisation and skilful construction"* whilst the Morning Post praised its *"real intrinsic merit"*, which it noted was *"greater than would at first appear."*<sup>(15)</sup> The Westminster Gazette, however, serving as an example of what many critics said, condemned the author's inability to *"give any credit to the Puritans for their good qualities and their good services to the community"*.<sup>(16)</sup> The Evening Chronicle had spoken of *"a sort of satire on the rigid Nonconformist household"*, whilst The Era had seen the playwright's portrayal of James Henry Kennion as *"a Wesleyan of the most serious type"*, and (later) along with his wife as *"ardent chapelites and temperance advocates."*<sup>(17)</sup>

Now such views are interesting because they begin to show that Brighouse's view of the play as *"a little out of date"*,<sup>(18)</sup> and his belief that *"though the portraiture is absolutely authentic and observed from identifiable origins, the attitude of parents and children suggest, for 1910, a social backwater rather than the broad stream of life"*<sup>(19)</sup> does not do Houghton justice. Even Brighouse's contention that the issues covered in the play are *"extant in other places besides the suburbs of Manchester"* (p.xlv) is an understatement. In 1913 Brighouse had been more explicit. Writing in The Manchester Guardian he said that:

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15. Both dated 9 May 1912, H.C. Vol.H. The play was staged there twice in 1912: May and Nov. See below.
  16. 20 Nov.1912, H.C. Vol.J.
  17. 22 and 26 Nov.1910; 11 May 1912: H.C. Vols. F and H respectively.
  18. Introduction, p.xliv.
  19. *ibid.* p.xlv.

*'The Younger Generation', even when it was written, was a little out of date. Not that its observation is at any point faulty, but the persons observed in it survived into 1910 rather than were socially typical of that time. In spirit the play belongs more to the nineties of the last century than to the tens of this.* (20)

The Morning Post had said the same thing several months earlier:

*The Kennions are less often met with nowadays than they might have been twenty, thirty or forty years ago.* (21)

Now a consideration of the many books on the Edwardian period is a major investigation in itself. However, a look at a few of them does tend to show that some of the critics of the play were perhaps not as fair to Houghton as they might have been or to put it another way Houghton's honest observation was more penetrating than some gave him credit for. Samuel Hynes, (22) for example, laments that writers on Edwardian England are inclined to call the time "golden" when in fact it was a period in which "the twentieth-century<sup>world</sup> was being made" and therefore "to think of Edwardian England as a peaceful, opulent world before the flood is to misread the age". (pp.4-5) He maintains that unlike other eras of transition this particular one was different because it followed on a very long period of stability based on Victoria's reign:

*The result of this lengthy tenure was an ossification of authority that encased and cramped the new ... institutions had become more important than the ideas they embodied.* (p.5)

The resulting conflicts meant,

*that in all these confrontations the pattern was the same: the New behaved brashly, insolently, or violently, and the Old responded with an arthritic resistance.* (p.8)

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20. 23 June 1913: in Brighthouse Collection.  
21. 20 Nov.1912, H.C. Vol.J.  
22. The Edwardian Turn of Mind, O U P, 1968.

A look at drink and drunkenness is interesting. In the play one finds the following:

Reggie: .... After all, what is a bit of blind  
[getting drunk] occasionally? It does you  
good .... Getting drunk takes you away from  
the sordid realities of every-day life.

and:

Arthur: ... The working man isn't poor because he  
gets drunk. He gets drunk because he is  
poor. He is too poor to afford any other  
form of pleasure .... It takes those poor  
beggars away from their awful surroundings  
for a few hours.

(The Works of Stanley Houghton, Vol.1, pp.240 and 247-8  
respectively).

Of this aspect Brighouse said: *"the battle here fought over again was fought, for most of us, at an earlier date ... in the eighteen-nineties rather than in the present century"* (p.xlv.). And he was right.

There did exist an expression in Queen Victoria's time which spoke of drink as *"the shortest way out of Manchester"* for those who could not escape from their daily routine, particularly at holiday times.<sup>(23)</sup>

Indeed, the number of persons per drinking licence issued in England and Wales rose steadily into the Edwardian era: 1871 = 201;

1901 = 316; 1911 = 398. Drink related problems *"constituted a major Victorian social problem .... [with] the amount of middle-class alcoholism [remaining] even more uncertain"*.<sup>(24)</sup>

In other words, the consumption of alcohol and its related problems may well have declined but it was still relatively high. Paul Thompson's study<sup>(25)</sup> shows that alcoholic consumption in 1910 was *"twice as high as it was to be twenty years later"* with the police bringing *"over 4,500 prosecutions*

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23. Donald Read, England 1868-1914, Longman, 1979, p.109.

24. *ibid.* pp.109-10.

25. The Edwardians : the remaking of British Society, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1976 (2<sup>nd</sup> Editn.)

for drunkenness every week, [that is] five times the number at the end of the First World War after licensing hours had been severely curtailed." (pp.197-8). Significantly,

*In Edwardian Britain there was one public house for every three hundred people ... not even the churches could afford so ubiquitous a refuge. (p.203)*

Drink into the Edwardian period was still, in Thompson's words, "an escape", meaning exactly the same as it did in Victoria's reign above. A report published in 1931 showed that whilst there had been a general decline in the total and per capita consumption of alcohol from the turn of the century to 1923, beer consumption, which in 1899 had stood at 32.5 gallons per head, fell to 26.31 gallons per head by 1910 but between 1911-13 actually rose to 28.31. In fact the changes between 1900-14 were neither violent nor abrupt.<sup>(26)</sup> It would seem that the battle Brighthouse referred to may have been fought in the 1890's but it was certainly not won. More significantly, the connection made by Arthur above concerning drink and poverty was certainly contemporary. Donald Read's view bears note:

*Did drinking cause poverty or was poverty a cause of drinking? Many middle-class commentators too readily accepted that drunkenness was the main, even the sole, cause of poverty. But more perceptive observers recognized that working-class people mostly turned to drink to escape from their miserable circumstances. (27)*

Drink was only one of the manifestations which tended to highlight the generation gap. Houghton was not slow to recognise others as well. For example, legitimate sexual fulfilment was delayed so much so that

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26. The Social and Economic aspects of the Drink Problem, Gollancz, 1931, pp.166 and 18 respectively.

27. England 1868-1914, op.cit. p.112.



the mean age of marriage in the early part of the century was higher than at any time in British history: 27 for men and 25 for women, which meant that *"for the typical Edwardian the gap between leaving school and full independence of marriage was twice as long as it is today."*<sup>(28)</sup> Another study corroborates this view and adds that it covered all classes.<sup>(29)</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, to find that Grace Kennion in the play, at nearly twenty-three years of age, has to argue furiously with her parents:

Mr. Kennion: [to Clifford, her intended husband]  
... *you haven't the strength of character that I should wish to see in the man who is to marry Grace.*

Grace: *Father, I don't at all insist on strength of character in my husband.*

Mr. Kennion: *(grimly). I do, my dear.*

Grace: *But you won't have to live with him. If I've got to live with a man all my life he ought to be someone I like, not someone you like.*

Mrs. Kennion: *I wish you wouldn't put it like that, Grace. 'Live with a man!' It doesn't sound proper.*

(p.254)

Moral education by parents was also under threat in that its continuation at Sunday School on their behalf was restricted by non-attendance by many of those beginning work.<sup>(30)</sup> Consider this discussion involving Reggie, the nineteen year old son, who works in a bank:

Reggie: *(hesitatingly). Don't you think I might chuck being secretary of the Sunday-school now?*

Mrs. Kennion: *Reggie!*

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28. Paul Thompson, op.cit. p.64.

29. Donald Read, op.cit. p.219.

30. Paul Thompson, op.cit. p.64.

- Mr. Kennion:     *(amazed) ... What for? Do you find the work is too hard?*
- Reggie:           *No; but it spoils a Sunday afternoon.*
- Mr. Kennion:     *You couldn't be better employed on a Sunday afternoon.*
- Reggie:           *Well, of course, that's a matter of opinion.*
- Mr. Kennion:     *(good-temperedly). Reggie, if you give up the Sunday-school I shall be very grieved.*
- Reggie:           *(grumbling). It's enough to make a fellow want to emigrate.*
- Mrs. Kennion:    *Good gracious, Reggie!*

(p.196)

Now attendance at Sunday school had deteriorated noticeably by the time of The Younger Generation (1909). The year 1900 marked the start of a general decline: some 30,000 less attendances were recorded in comparison with 1899 despite a population rise of some 300,000.<sup>(31)</sup> This ebb continued thereafter at a rate of 5%-6%<sup>(32)</sup> which means that by 1909 Reggie's objection would have been no more than an excuse, a typical adolescent rebellion. However, this was not the case and Houghton must have been fully aware of it. The general decline did not include one sect in particular: the Wesleyans. Their attendance figures actually rose during the same period so that by 1906 they had well over a million attending Sunday school<sup>(33)</sup> and whilst they too experienced a fall in number it was minimal and only really took effect from about 1911. As such Reggie's rebellion was specific: attendance

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31. John Ferguson (Ed), Christianity, Society and Education, SPCK, 1981, p.127.
32. *ibid.* p.129.
33. A.H. Halsey (Ed), Trends in British Society Since 1900, Macmillan, 1972, p.443.

at Sunday school was an integral part of family life. This also explains his parents' reaction: the propriety it helped to instil was part of that larger method of parental control. Indeed,

*If propriety expresses the forms of morality without convictions, then the Edwardian period was an Age of Propriety, of propriety carried to absurd extremes. Conventional standards of behavior [sic] which had developed from the evangelical ethics of a century earlier had become rigid and empty gestures of decorum, important not because they implied moral rightness, but because they seemed to protect social stability, public morals, religion, and the British Empire against the threat of change. (34)*

It is in connection with the Nonconformist movement that one finds the greatest relevance to the play. That group as a whole

*tended to concentrate on a particular social level, the major groups running from the well-to-do Congregationalists, through the Wesleyans to the lower middle-class Baptists and the respectable working-class Primitive Methodists.*

Indeed,

*Nor can there be any doubt of the advantages which the supportive community of a suitable chapel could offer .... For a vast number of respectable, intelligent, fairly prosperous families the chapel is the only social centre; its meetings the only approach to amusement, its friendships the chief road to desirable marriage, and often the chief source of prosperity in business.*

(Paul Thompson, op.cit. p.207)

In the play one sees it in action: Mr. Kennion is arguing with his daughter over her tryst with Clifford Rawson:

Grace:                    *How can you get to know any one well enough to find out you want to be engaged to him unless you see a good deal of him first?*

Mr. Kennion: *(slightly puzzled).* You've always had plenty of opportunities of meeting your brothers' friends here at home, and young men at the tennis club, and - and at the chapel.

Grace: That's not quite the same thing, is it?

(p.200)

Shortly afterwards Mr. Kennion is found talking with his brother who is visiting the family from his adopted country. They are talking about their mother, whose grandfather, incidentally, had been a friend of John Wesley (p.257).

Mr. Kennion: She goes to service morning and evening on Sundays. She kept her Bible-class on until last year.

Tom: Amazing! Still, I can't help feeling that she seems to regard the chapel as the hub of the universe.

Mr. Kennion: It is the principal interest in her life.

Tom: Curious how one gets rid of that point of view living abroad.

Mr. Kennion: *(smiling)* That was mother's chief objection to your going abroad at first. Do you remember?

Tom: Rather .... Even now I suspect she thinks of Germany as an ungodly place inhabited by rather light-minded people.

Mr. Kennion: Well, Tom, you know, we can't exactly approve of the way they spend Sunday in Germany.

Tom: *(laughing heartily)* The Continental Sunday, eh? Ha! Ha!

Mr. Kennion: *(gravely)* I think the English way is best, Tom.

Tom: ... and that the chapel's the noblest institution in Salchester.

Mr. Kennion: *(very seriously)* Well, Tom, if I do -

Tom: (heartily) Don't apologise for it.  
That's the spirit that has made England  
what it is.

Mr. Kennion: (pleased) Do you really think so?

Tom: (seriously) I do. Thank God I haven't  
got it!

(pp.204-5)

Much more pertinent to this study is the link between religion and politics: "the great strength which religion could still show in the Industrial Britain of the early 20th Century should not be underestimated",<sup>(35)</sup> particularly,

*the connections between the general reanimation of Nonconformity in the 1900's and the Liberal political triumph of 1906, between the subsequent Anglican resurgence and the Conservative recovery of 1910 .... Especially in the north [where] many of the founders of the new Labour party spoke a language which came as much from the chapels as from the hustings.* (36)

In the play Mr. Kennion is approached to be the Liberal candidate for "Longton Park Ward at the City Council Elections" (p.210). Kennion, modestly, asks why he is being chosen:

Mr. Fowle: You see it's like this. The Nonconformist element is damn powerful in this ward. Now you're a big gun at your chapel, and that'll rake in a lot of votes. I'm a Churchman myself, but I see that without the Nonconformist vote the Liberal Party here would be in the soup. Then Grignall's (37) a brewer and you're a teetotaler. If we work it properly - temperance reform and social purity and all that game - we shall detach some of the temperance Conservatives. (p.211)

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35. Paul Thompson, op.cit. p.211.

36. *ibid.* pp.213-14. Such a view is also given by R.C.K. Ensor, *England 1870-1914*, O U P, 1936, Ch.XV.

37. The present incumbent.

Mrs. Kennion is elated and the conversation expands:

Mrs. Kennion:      *Fancy you a Councillor, James.*

Mr. Fowle:          *It may not stop at that.*

Tom:                  *Alderman!*

Mr. Leadbitter:    *Lord Mayor!*

Mrs. Kennion:      *A knighthood!*

... Tom:              *That may not be the end of it.  
Member of Parliament perhaps.*

(p.213)

In the context of Thompson's view that "*there can be no doubt that the force that carried [people] ... into the Edwardian Parliament was partly religious*",<sup>(38)</sup> the play was indeed contemporary. The Younger Generation then was more typical than most critics allowed. By it Houghton was merely doing what he had decided to do earlier: present a fresh, humorous look at the everyday (see p.54).

On 8 May 1912<sup>(39)</sup> the Gaiety Company performed the play at the Coronet Theatre, Notting Hill, London. Reference has already been made to its success. However, Houghton, whilst pleased that he had succeeded in front of a London audience with a three-act play, was not fully content. He realized that although the Coronet was geographically in the West End it was not theatrically and he dearly wished to succeed in the heart of London's theatre land.<sup>(40)</sup> On 26 June 1912 he wrote to Basil Dean:

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38. Paul Thompson, op.cit. p.214.

39. A. Nicoll, English Drama 1900-1930, op.cit. p.734.

40. The magazine Truth had said much the same, hoping that the Gaiety troupe would "*take a theatre nearer the theatrical centre than the Coronet*": 12 June 1912, H.C. Vol.I.

*You may be interested to hear that Harrison (41) has accepted THE YOUNGER GENERATION for the Haymarket. It doesn't sound true, but I signed the contract this morning. Nevertheless I shan't be quite comfortable until I get his signature and cheque on account. (42)*

Writing to Monkhouse a week later he said:

*I ... met Frederick Harrison at the Haymarket & talked over the cast for the "Y.G.". Rather jolly passing the London Stage in review for your play. Going out he showed me all the way to the front door from his room - and in the entrance he pointed to a place where the mosaic pavement had been worn away.*

*"'Bunty' (43) has done that", he said. And then with charming courtesy: "I'll have it repaired for you"!... (44)*

It must be remembered that only two weeks earlier Houghton's Hindle Wakes had agitated and intrigued the London press and negotiations were under way to get it staged for a long run (see Ch.8).

Houghton attended some of the rehearsals of The Younger Generation and on one visit met the playwright Thomas Evelyn Scott-Ellis:- Baron Howard de Walden, (45) *"who received me with graciousness". (46)*

Unfortunately the present Baron cannot find any record of the meeting in his father's papers. His father, however, did own the Haymarket Theatre (47) and was also President of the O.P. Club (see Ch.10 p.347). Surprisingly, Houghton was unhappy with the actor Stanley Drewitt who played James Henry Kennion, a part Houghton once played in an amateur

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41. Frederick Harrison, Manager of the Haymarket Theatre.

42. In Dean Collection, John Rylands University of Manchester Library (Deansgate).

43. Bunty Pulls the Strings by G. Moffatt, from 18 July 1911 - see A. Nicoll, English Drama 1900-1930, p.839.

44. 2 July 1912, A N M 10.

45. See A. Nicoll, English Drama 1900-1930, op.cit. p.628.

46. Houghton to Monkhouse, 6 Nov. 1912, A N M 10.

47. Letter to me, 7 Dec. 1982.

production.<sup>(48)</sup> Drewitt had also produced it when it was at the Coronet Theatre. Miss Horniman obviously knew of his dissatisfaction. In a reply to her he wrote:

*Mr. Drewitt might produce 'The Younger Generation' at the Haymarket, but I think I would rather have Lyall Swete in the part. Mr. Drewitt gradually over-played as he went on.*<sup>(49)</sup>

Swete (1865-1930) was himself an actor, producer and playwright who had joined the Haymarket in December 1909<sup>(50)</sup> and whose play Pitch and Soap Houghton might have seen at the Haymarket in April 1912.<sup>(51)</sup> Houghton may well have been frightened that the ~~slightest~~ fault would mar his play's reputation in the heart of London's theatres. In the event Drewitt's performance was praised highly in virtually every review.

When the play opened on 19 November 1912 the Daily Mirror's cartoonist produced a sketch of a jack-in-the-box with the play's title inscribed on the box. Jack, who had just sprung up, (with a smile on his face, a cigar in one hand and a latch-key in the other) had displaced a parent from the top of the box. Harrison was so pleased with the sketch that he had it reproduced on posters which were subsequently used on London's hoardings.<sup>(52)</sup> The Daily Mirror also took some forty-four

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48. Introduction, p.xxvi, but no further details given.

49. Houghton to Miss Horniman, 13 Aug.1912, in Cade Collection.

50. Who Was Who in the Theatre, 1912-76, Pitman, 1978, Vol.4, p.2290.

51. A. Nicoll, op.cit. p.977.

52. The cartoon and information is to be found in the Evening Standard 26 Nov.1912, H.C. Vol.J. That paper does not make it clear whether the cartoon actually appeared in the Daily Mirror or not. A search through the latter between 12-30 Nov. has proved fruitless.



photographs of the play and evidently presented them to Houghton. <sup>(53)</sup>

In central London the play lived up to Houghton's expectations (see p. 161). In the triple bill <sup>(54)</sup> his play was regarded as "*the piece de resistance*", meeting with "*immediate favour and enthusiastic reception*". More importantly for Houghton it was regarded this time "*from an artistic standpoint*" as "*one of the best pieces of work the author has ever done*". <sup>(55)</sup> As regards its being a diatribe or "*a rebel manifesto*" <sup>(56)</sup>, one now saw, for example, The Westminster Gazette conclude, but almost apologetically, that "*probably the author will say that he presents a picture unaccompanied by any criticism*". <sup>(57)</sup> Had its writer read the Daily Chronicle not two days earlier he could have been sure. Houghton, in an interview, stated quite categorically that:

*One thing I especially hope ... is that no one will think I mean to preach a sermon. It is intended ... simply as a presentment of life, and those who look for a 'message' will at any rate be going the wrong way about to find it.* <sup>(58)</sup>

As I have shown, "*presentment of life*" it certainly was. In Manchester too (but not until after Houghton's death) it was acknowledged that the play had only:

*the faintest of moral interest ... a note of revolt that might almost be translated into cynical acquiescence ... without any meritricious paraphernalia.*

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53. Not dated. Now in the Stanley Houghton Collection. See Appendix 2.

54. Along with Rosalind (J.M. Barrie) and An Adventure of Aristide Pujol (W.J. Locke).

55. Manchester Courier, 20 Nov. 1912, H.C. Vol.J. By this date Houghton was working on his twenty-fifth play (see Appendices). This present play, it will be recalled, had been seen at The Coronet in May 1912 (see p. 161 supra).

56. The phrase used by Dixon Scott to summarise a general view held of it by some of the press, in Men of Letters, op.cit. p.164.

57. 20 Nov. 1912, H.C. Vol.J. Compare this with its view on p. 152 supra).

58. 18 Nov. 1912. p.5.

Succinctly, the play,

*arrests, amuses, succeeds.* <sup>(59)</sup>

The play continued to be a success for many years. <sup>(60)</sup> It was broadcast by the B.B.C. three times on the radio between 1946-1971 <sup>(61)</sup> whilst Granada Television transmitted it on 1 Sept. 1959. <sup>(62)</sup> In 1913 it was taken to New York by one of America's top theatrical managers, Charles Frohman (who will be discussed later in the thesis, p.387). It opened at the Lyceum on 25 September 1913 <sup>(63)</sup> for some sixty performances. <sup>(64)</sup> The New York Times (26 Sept; p.11), whilst erroneously stating that it was written after Hindle Wakes, was conciliatory in its tone:

*Mr. Houghton evidently knows his types perfectly and he has the skill to transfer them to the theatre.*

However,

*in this country, and in New York especially, parental authority is not quite the same as it appeared to be in that sombre-hued, non-conformist household. But, happily, our audiences are sufficiently catholic to be able to appreciate and enjoy a play, even though much of it is out of the range of their immediate experience.*

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59. The Manchester Guardian, 11 Dec. 1913, p.16 (the day he died).
60. See, for example, Nigel Playfair, The Story of the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, Chatto and Windus, 1925, p.30 or James Hepburn (Ed) Letters of Arnold Bennett, O U P, 1970, Vol.3, pp.90-91 or Joyce Knowlson, Theatre Collection, op.cit. for more dates and venues (latter in Manchester Central Reference Library Theatre Collection).
61. 11 May 1946 (Home Service); 30 April 1949 (ditto); 23 Oct.1971 (Radio 4) - see appropriate Radio Times.
62. Granda's Manchester Plays, Manchester U P, 1962.
63. Not 29 Sept. as noted in I.F. Marcossion and D. Frohman, Charles Frohman: Manager and Man, John Lane, 1916, p.433.
64. J.M. Salem, A Guide to Critical Reviews, Part 3, The Scarecrow Press, 1968, pp.125-6.

Just why the play succeeded in the American culture is a point that will be considered much later (see p.291). For the moment it fulfilled another of Houghton's ambitions: to succeed in the U.S.A. (65)

Several critics have discussed this play in their books and it would not be out of place here to comment on some of their conclusions. For example, Allardyce Nicoll contends that the play "*fails because of a discrepancy between aim and means*". This view is a misjudgement on the part of Nicoll to appreciate Houghton's intention. He accuses the playwright of mixing 'kinds' of literature, that is the serious and the comic:

*Houghton's play deals with two distinct worlds, and he was not such a genius that he could fuse those two together into a novel whole.* (66)

As I have shown, Houghton dealt with one world - the contemporary one. Whether or not he was a genius is debatable. Similarly, A.E. Morgan's view that Houghton was

*occupied primarily with his thesis, with the result that the dialogue is full of the dramatist's idea, whilst the characters are wooden and unconvincing* (67)

is invalid because first of all one has Houghton's own statement to the contrary (see above) and secondly because that statement is further borne out in his other plays as I have (and hope to) shown. Furthermore, I believe that Morgan's final contention that the play cannot be

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65. This ambition is discussed more fully in Ch.8.

66. British Drama : an historical survey, Harrap, 1945, (3rd Edn.), p.385.

67. Tendencies of Modern English Drama, Constable, 1924, p.177.

"assigned a high position on its intrinsic merits" (p.179) is now negated. Edward Storer,<sup>(68)</sup> whilst offering the possibility that one is "not sure whether the serious bits are ironical, while some of the flippancies suggest a serious intention", comes down on the negative side: "this subtlety is not at all to Mr. Houghton's credit" and he therefore draws the erroneous conclusion that the play was

*a mixture of several conventions or styles - stock comedy with modernist social philosophy and Shavianism, and his own natural wit and sentiment.*

The Younger Generation is not "quite Shavian in its definite dialectical purpose". (p.419)

Two writers, in my opinion, seem to have got it right: William Archer and Dixon Scott. The former was "astonished" by the play's technical accomplishment.<sup>(69)</sup> In fact Archer compared Houghton's method of working with Ibsen's, except that

*Mr. Stanley Houghton, having no leanings Ibsenwards, does not throw in any poetry. Not merely in expression, but in conception and structure as well, his play is a piece of very sober prose .... [he has] mastered, seemingly without effort, the difficult art of compressing [his] observations of life into the narrow dimensions of the theatre. (70)*

The key phrase is "observations of life". Notably, Archer had said the same thing elsewhere but this time with more significance for this thesis: Houghton, he said,

*wrote his plays to amuse ... cared nothing for social 'messages', and ... was a playwright first and everything else afterwards, imitating the masters for their manner only and careless of their matter. (71)*

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68. The British Review, Vol.1V, No.3, Dec.1913, pp.417-18.

69. Introduction, p.xliv.

70. Quoted in Introduction, p.xliv.

71. The Manchester Playgoer, Vol.2, No.1, 1912-14, p.26.

Dixon Scott was perfectly blunt in his assessment:

*his genius made it impossible for him to write even a claptrap comedietta without turning it into a perfect reflection of his audience. (72)*

Perhaps Houghton's own characters should have the last word:

Mr. Kennion:           *... I don't know where you've got these ideas from.*

Arthur:               *They are in the air, nowadays.*  
(p.248)

In concluding this particular aspect of the play it is worth noting that when a memorial was planned to honour Houghton (see Ch.13), a suitable inscription was sought. Its choice was apposite, and whilst it was not taken from The Younger Generation, it still has those three words in it. In fact, most of the quotation from the play, The Perfect Cure (1912), warrants quoting. It tends to act as a summary of The Younger Generation. It is spoken by Martha, a "jolly, honest lady of middle age". It is one of the longest deliveries by a Houghton character (some 400 words):

*.... Do you know what's the world's greatest tragedy? It's the tragedy of every nation and of every person that they grow old. Old age can't understand youth. It sees youth full of excitement and enthusiasm about things it can't appreciate, and it thinks those things foolishnesses and stupidities and horrible mistakes. Sometimes they are foolishnesses and the rest of it, but that doesn't matter. Youth's got to go forward with them and find out what they are worth for itself. It has no right to take the opinion of old age on the point .... There's a struggle between every generation. It's terrible and cruel; but it's bound to come .... The younger generation is bound to win. That's how the world goes on. (73)*

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72. Men of Letters, op.cit. p.168.

73. The Works of Stanley Houghton, Vol.2, pp.241-2. The last thirteen words are inscribed on the memorial plaque to be found on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of Manchester Central Reference Library (see Ch.13, p.405).

During my discussion with Mrs. D. Caw (the widow of Houghton's nephew)<sup>(74)</sup> there arose a chance reference to a court case involving the Houghton family. Unfortunately no other details of any sort were known. A search in Manchester's Law Library (14 Kennedy St.), however, revealed that the case had been sufficiently important to warrant the status of precedent and was therefore published in its entirety by the Patent Office.<sup>(75)</sup> The case was even followed by The Times, who summarised it on 28 January 1931, p.4. Its relevance to this thesis, other than its intrinsic merit, is its unique factual account of the full history of The Younger Generation to 1931. A brief look at it will reveal facts which otherwise may not have come to light, and as such makes its inclusion in this thesis valid.

The case was heard on January 19-23 inclusive and 26-27 inclusive 1931 in the High Court of Justice (Chancery Division) before Mr. Justice Bennett. The plaintiffs were the trustees of the Will of Stanley Houghton (his sister and her husband) and they brought the action to restrain the defendants Film Booking Offices Ltd. and Universal Pictures Ltd. from

*selling, letting for hire or exhibiting in public a cinematograph film under the title "The Younger Generation" in such a way as to represent to the trade or public that such cinematograph film was a film version of the play by Stanley Houghton. (p.329)*

Of factual interest is that the play was performed: in Manchester in 1919, 1921 and 1925; at nine (unspecified) towns in 1928, eight in 1925, six in 1927 and 1928 and seven in 1929; broadcast by B.B.C.

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74. See p.xi for details about Mrs. Caw.

75. F.G. Underhay (Ed), Reports Of Patent, Design, Trade Mark And Other Cases, Vol.XLVIII, His Majesty's Stationery Office Press, 1932, pp.329-41.

radio on 6 February 1929; performed at The Duke of York's theatre from 10 February - 9 March 1913; toured in the provinces by Iden Payne in numerous theatres from 17 February 1913 to 19 December 1914; toured by E.T. Heys (who will be discussed later, p.207) and Max Allen in 1915, 1917-22 and 1926; performed by Lena Ashwell's company in 1923; performed in the U.S.A. 1915; South Africa 1915 and 1916; India in 1913 and 1919; and Hong Kong in 1919. Samuel French Ltd. had also sold over 15,000 copies of the play since 1910 and the demand was still active (pp.330-31 and 336). Finally, it would appear that the Caw family (the executors) had it in mind to sell the film rights of the play. This was not a fanciful notion as two other plays by Houghton had been filmed, one of them four times. (76)

It was perhaps, not surprising that the action was brought, particularly when the advertisement for the said film at the New Oxford Theatre, Manchester, on 19 November 1929 (almost exactly nineteen years to the day of the play's first production in Manchester) concluded with the words: *the great Stage Play made into a still greater Film.* (p.331).

The judge's words, in summing up, are I believe, apposite:

*Mr. Stanley Houghton's play depended for its success not upon dramatic effect, but upon the brilliance of the dialogue. So long as silent film only were in use it was impossible to reproduce brilliance of dialogue by means of the cinematograph but the invention of the talking film, a comparatively recent invention, has I think given a value to the right to reproduce by means of cinematograph films this play ... [which] with the aid of ... a skilled scenario writer, [makes] the film rights of this play ... valuable. (p.338)*

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76. i.e. Phipps and Hindle Wakes respectively.  
See pp.326, 310 *infra.* for details.

Ironically Houghton's play never was filmed. The plaintiffs (Houghton's family) lost the case and had substantial costs to pay. In fact the aftermath was prolonged as the following letter from Cyril Hogg (of Samuel French Ltd.) to Houghton's brother-in-law William Newton Caw shows:

*... though I pressed Reynolds [Caw's solicitors] for the costs of the action, it appears that they [Caw's solicitors] are disputing the bill which has been presented to them by the cinema in Manchester, so that for the time being nothing can be done ... (77)*

Houghton's next three plays are of interest for different reasons: the first one is completely devoid of humour; the second took an unusually long time (for him) to write; and the third is not mentioned by name in The Works, despite the fact that Brighouse was its joint-author. The three will, therefore, be considered together in the next chapter.

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77. Dated 15 April 1931, in Stanley Houghton Collection.



CHAPTER SIX  
THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE  
GINGER  
THE HILLARYS

As mentioned in the previous chapter Houghton's next three plays are interesting for a variety of reasons. However, whilst The Master of the House and Ginger follow on chronologically from The Younger Generation, the play The Hillarys does not.<sup>(1)</sup> Its inclusion in this chapter, however, will be explained later.

The Master of the House, a one-act play, was written in December 1909.<sup>(2)</sup> It was first produced at the Gaiety on 26 September 1910:<sup>(3)</sup> a red letter day for the playwright as it was the first-ever occasion on which he had the complete bill to himself. The play was the curtain raiser to his Independent Means. Oddly, the licence application to the Lord Chamberlain was only granted some two weeks after the first production.<sup>(4)</sup> The Manchester Evening News anticipated its success based on Houghton's track record:

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1. It was written after The Fifth Commandment, Fancy Free, Partners and Hindle Wakes.
  2. Introduction, p.xlv.
  3. Pogson, p.201.
  4. L.C.P. Vol.4, No.700 dated 10 Oct.1910 for the Gaiety. The Examiner of Plays' review is not available. The typescript carries the names of the intended cast except for the character Mr. Owens which has a question-mark. This corresponds with the list given in The Works, Vol.3, p.308, but with Mr. Owens being played by Herbert Lomas.

*Mr. Stanley Houghton, one of the most successful of the band of local authors .... has already shown what he is capable of doing within the narrow limits of a one-act play. (5)*

The origins of the play are unknown but certain facts do provide a speculative framework. The play was almost complementary to The Dear Departed in that it dealt with the possible provisions of a will between interested but uncaring parties. In that play, however, the hero was assumed to be dead, whereas in The Master of the House he was presumed to be alive.<sup>(6)</sup> In both plays the drama hinges upon mistakes but their tones are completely different. Houghton was also known to read the work of J.M. Synge<sup>(7)</sup> and was probably familiar with The Shadow of the Glen (1903), a play with similarities to The Master of the House. Also, just prior to the writing of The Master of the House, Houghton had written two prose short stories, both with similar themes to these plays. Indeed, if one discounts the humour of The Dear Departed, one is left with a group of comparable works. It is my contention that Houghton, whilst having a greater interest in drama as a genre, was at the time experimenting with prose (see Ch.11) and what he was probably doing was seeing which medium was better suited to the portrayal of a basic idea. This would then also help to account for Houghton's high regard for the play despite poor reviews.<sup>(8)</sup>

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5. 24 Sept.1910, H.C. Vol.E.

6. See Ch.3, p. 71 for The Dear Departed details.

7. See Set Down in Malice, op.cit. p.62, and pp. 276 and 366 of this thesis (the last concerns some translations made by Houghton of a writer who influenced Synge).

8. Introduction, p.xlvi.

The first of these two short stories, Mr. Ovens, was Houghton's first printed back-pager in The Manchester Guardian.<sup>(9)</sup> It tells the story of the death of its eponymous hero (the name also used for the dead man in The Master of the House) and the treatment he had received from his adult children as a widower. The children were not malicious but rather too self-preoccupied to have much time for Mr. Ovens. The narrator is mildly ironic but the tone is sad, almost elegiac. The second story, The Workings of Providence, was probably Houghton's first published prose fiction.<sup>(10)</sup> It deals with two brothers who appear to be concerned for the welfare of their aged widowed sister who is being proposed to by a younger man. As it turns out she has a small fortune and the brothers are keen to be the beneficiaries. Their plan to discourage the marriage goes wrong and the sister, on dying, leaves her wealth to the local Church. In The Master of the House, Mr. Ovens, aged 71, has remarried a woman thirty-five years his junior. Her motives were mercenary, as noted in the following conversation between herself and Edie, her sister:

Edie: *He's been a lot of trouble to you these five years.*

Mrs. O: *Trouble! You may well say that. Let alone my marrying him when I was only thirty, and I might easily have found some young fellow who'd have been glad to ask me .... He'll not last much longer ...* (The Works, Vol.3, p.57)

More importantly, however, is the imminent arrival of the solicitor. It appears that Mrs. Ovens has persuaded her husband to reconsider leaving half of his estate to his wayward son Fred (aged 36), who bitterly resents his step-mother:

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9. 28 Oct.1909, p.14. For a consideration of the prestige of such articles see p.106 of thesis. The story is also in The Works, Vol.3, pp.157-60.
10. In The Gaiety Theatre Christmas Annual, 1909, pp.88-100. These were published for several years. Some are located in Manchester Central Reference Library, Theatre Collection, Ref.Ma21.

Mrs. O: .... He's going to alter his will, at last.

Edie: My word! Going to cut Fred out?

Mrs. O: (compressing her lips). That I can't say.

Edie: Is he going to leave everything to you?

Mrs. O: Nor that either. But if he did, wouldn't I have deserved it? (ibid.)

When Fred unexpectedly arrives an acrimonious argument arises which only ends with the discovery that Mr. Owens has in fact been dead throughout the scene. The title of the play, which was claimed by both Fred and Mrs. Owens at various points, is ironically twisted at the end when the curtain descends on a household deserted by all save the corpse.

Bringing all these facets together produces an interesting viewpoint, particularly when related to a part of The Workings of Providence. The Rector (who becomes the intermediary for the brothers and ultimately the beneficiary of the sister's will) is introduced as "*smoking a pipe and ... reading Mr. Galsworthy's latest novel, which interested him greatly*". (p.90). The novel must have been Fraternity (Feb.1909)<sup>(11)</sup> which has a tenuous link with the theme under consideration. That novel is concerned with the absolute distinction between the rich and the poor: when the poor enter the world of the rich disorder and unhappiness follow.<sup>(12)</sup> However, the idea most deplored by the novel is its title: the dream of universal brotherhood. Galsworthy never intended a redistribution of wealth but rather a greater, more Christian

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11. Catherine Dupré, John Galsworthy : a biography, Collins, 1976, p.162.

12. I am indebted to Samuel Hynes, The Edwardian Turn of Mind, O U P, 1968, p.78 for this view. He makes no connections with Houghton, however.

consideration of others: a greater kindness to all irrespective of class or wealth - indeed, a fraternity. In his preface to an earlier novel, The Country House (1907), he wrote:

*A temperamental dislike, not to say horror, of complacency, conscious or unconscious, undoubtedly played a part in the writing of 'The Country House' .... To think that birth, property, position ... is anything but a piece of good luck is, of course, ridiculous. But to see this too keenly, too introspectively, is to risk making a pet of self-distrust (another kind of complacency) ...*

It is not surprising then that the above quotation from The Workings of Providence should continue thus:

*... although he did not consider it [Fraternity] so entertaining as 'The Country House'. (p.90) (13)*

This whole idea of the complacent, almost uncaring attitude of people to one another, begun so humorously in The Dear Departed, became for Houghton a serious view (perhaps reinforced by Galsworthy) so much so that he omitted from it the very strength of his dramatic ability: comedy. This play and The Old Testament and the New are his only professional works devoid of humour. (14)

It is perhaps not surprising then that the critics were not pleased. C.E. Montague, reviewing it for the M.G. on its opening night, made a direct comparison with The Dear Departed, and using that play as a yardstick lamented that in The Master of the House

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13. Houghton and Galsworthy were later to deal with similarities in drama and exchange letters as a result. See Ch.8, p.283.

14. The General's Word and The Reckoning, amateur plays, are also humourless.

*one felt ... as if one climactic thrill had come, hesitated for a moment about its own finality, and then decided to go on and improve on itself - which it does, only that one has that sense of a slight check, an intermission, and then a renewal of tension, and not a continuous cumulation of shiversome grimness.* (15)

The Era was curt: *"it adds little to the author's reputation".* (16)

It also commented on the play's lukewarm reception. Brighthouse was also of the same opinion: *"As an experiment in the gruesome it is interesting",* but, *"not wholly successful".* (17) And that was the general view held; Houghton was expected to provide quick humour. Only one critic seems to have acknowledged Houghton's skill in this play and then only after his death:

*an intense and arresting piece of work [which] displays the fact that in Houghton the qualities of satire and humour by no means bounded the range of his possibilities.* (18)

Despite its 'failure' in the eyes of the critics, however, the play was back on at the Gaiety within two months. (19)

In 1911 it was translated into French by Louis Pennequin and published as Le Maître de la Maison (Paris). Samuel French Ltd. published it individually in 1913 and again in a collection of Houghton's one-act plays. (20) In 1929 it was published in Welsh as Meistr y Ty by J. Ellis Williams (French) and J.W. Marriott included it in his One-Act Plays of Today (3<sup>rd</sup> series, Harrap, 1926). In 1937 a Scottish version was published by French entitled A Tartar Caught by Felix Fair.

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15. 27 Sept.1910, H.C. Vol.E.

16. 1 Oct.1910, *ibid.*

17. Introduction, p.xlvi.

18. Tinsley Pratt, The Manchester Dramatists, Sherratt and Hughes, 1914, pp.218-219.

19. Pogson, p.202, i.e. 28 Nov.1910.

20. A. Nicoll, English Drama 1900-1930, op.cit. p.734. The others were: Fancy Free, Phipps, The Fifth Commandment, The Dear Departed.

Finally, in the autumn of 1913, Iden Payne, who had been persuaded by the actor Whitford Kane to direct a season at the Chicago Theatre Society,<sup>(21)</sup> produced a bill of four one-act plays, two of which were Houghton's and which were "*much in vogue*":<sup>(22)</sup> The Master of the House and Phipps (1912). Their start was favourable: "*the opening bill augured well for the season*". (p.156). Indeed, Kane's acting helped to prove a point for Houghton who had always held that the accusation that the play was checked midway was the fault of the actor and not the play,

*a view to some extent confirmed by the play's superior effectiveness when, later on, the part of Fred Ovens was played both in England and America, by Mr. Whitford Kane.* (23)

Kane had appeared in other Houghton plays but was particularly keen to please him in that production.<sup>(24)</sup> The play continued to be a success for some time in America, especially in its little theatres.<sup>(25)</sup>

From March to December 1910 Houghton spent what was for him an "*unusually long time*"<sup>(26)</sup> writing his next play, Ginger, a four act comedy.

Surprisingly, it became a play for which Houghton had "*a deep dislike*",<sup>(27)</sup> and Brighouse therefore excluded it from The Works. Until recently the

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21. Whitford Kane, Are We All Met, Elkin Mathews and Marrot, 1931, p.153.

22. *ibid.* p.156.

23. Introduction, p.xlvi.

24. For fuller details see Are We All Met, *op.cit.* pp.90 ff.

25. See Constance D'Arcy Mackay, The Little Theatre in the United States, Henry Holt and Co., 1917, p.142.

26. Introduction, p.xlvi.

27. *ibid.*

only known copy was a typescript lodged with the Lord Chamberlain. However, not only has the manuscript come to light but also something that can only be considered unique: the only known example of Houghton's working method; here, for the first time, is evidence of that meticulous planning alluded to by Brighouse (Introduction, p.xxxix), part of which is written on the back of a letter from Ben Iden Payne of 1910.<sup>(28)</sup>

The plan is interesting. It starts off with the title and is then followed by a list of the characters. Next to the majority one finds biographical details or traits. For example, amongst the fourteen speaking parts are:

*Mr. (David) Fairbrother*      *Radical non-socialist democrat.*

*Hon. & Rev. Frederick Vernon-Mowbray*      *(innocent duped by H.)*

*Adelaide, Countess of Castlebar*      *(fat, hungry, rude)*

*Harold Vernon-Mowbray*      *(in debt, borrows, teaches baccarat.)*

*Maud Sankey*      *(vulgar girl friend of Kate) (flighty)*

*R.J. Saunders Friend of Harolds*      *Boaster, Paris?*

*Teddy Fairbrother*      *(Coller. drawing, solemn, funny pictures)* <sup>(29)</sup>

This is then followed by a sketch of the stage and the position of the walls and furniture. Act I also carries what would appear to be the proposed times for each act viz: Act I 34, Act 2 43, Act 3 35, Act 4 22, totalling 134 minutes. The next page has a step by step development of the Act with Houghton indicating not only plot progression but also dramatic areas to expand upon.

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28. The letter is the one mentioned inviting Houghton to the Gaiety to discuss The Younger Generation (See p.150 supra). Both the MS. and the plan are located in the Stanley Houghton Collection.

29. Coller was the name of the artist who drew the sketches for Houghton's political satires (See Ch.4.). He probably intended to commission Coller to prepare some as props.



For example,

*Mr F & Gee playing chess.*

*Ginger very humble but cheerful & vulgarly humorous.*

*Ginger involved in political discussion ...*

*Teddy comic business.*

*... Ginger as lodger .... Does Domestic work. Comic business  
hanging pictures or clearing away.*

*Ginger called out of room to see visitor. Nervous. Is it a writ?*

*Probation? Sack? Work up interest.*

*... Pathetic touch with Kate ...*

Each section is crossed by a number of black lines indicating, perhaps, that he had finished with that particular section, a type of marker, since he only wrote in his spare time. After this one finds a page with a line dividing it into two (unequal) columns. One column indicates who is where at any given time whilst the other notes (briefly) everything that is to happen. For example,

*All except Maud & Kate go into Dining Room*

*Private talk between  
Maude & Kate about Ginger  
& fondness. exact situation  
disclosed.*

*Kate rushes from room*

*They ask what's matter?  
Ginger still intent on  
future.*

On the back of this particular page is written "*Focus on Ginger a bit*". This was perhaps the result of a re-reading and a realization that the hero was not, at the time, as central to the action as he ought to have been. Finally, whilst the rest of the plan develops as above one finds that Act Four is designated "*Revised Act 4*". These two facts then could help to account for the relatively long time taken over the play. Other than these points the plan has few alterations. However, there was one major problem: what to call the hero (his full name as opposed to his sobriquet). This point will be taken up again shortly.

The play has been acted on at least three occasions in this country and all of those in the latter part of 1913. It received the Lord Chamberlain's seal for its first production on 19 July 1913 at the Town Hall, Hunstanton, Norfolk.<sup>(30)</sup> As the play was excluded from The Works it would be as well to summarise the plot. Fortunately the Examiner of Plays' review is attached to the typescript:<sup>(31)</sup>

*"Ginger" is the nickname of 'James Mainwaring', a young man employed in a warehouse who lodges with humble folk in Hammersmith, called the "Fairbrothers" & is informally "keeping company" with the daughter 'Kate'. Suddenly & unexpectedly he comes into a baronetcy & a fortune. He is immediately taken up by the family of the "Hon & Rev. Frederick Vernon-Mowbray" & becomes, almost against his will, engaged to "Miss Helena Vernon-Mowbray". The family get all they can out of Sir James & lecture him constantly on his bad manners & various solecisms - till at last he bolts, returns to the Fairbrothers & to the girl of his heart.*

*Recommended for licence.  
Charles H. Brookfield.*

What adds to the play's interest is the fact that Houghton only agreed to release its rights for production as late as 1913 and then only to Esmé Percy. Significantly the deal was only signed after Houghton had taken up permanent residence in Paris. Percy was granted the "sole rights" to perform the play "in the provinces of Great Britain and Ireland and the London suburban theatres".<sup>(32)</sup> The fee in advance

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30. L.C.P. Vol.25, No.1814. The play was received by that office on 30 June 1913. The character Bessie Bold (waitress) whilst appearing on the list of characters is omitted from the text of this typescript. Also some actors' names do appear alongside some characters: James Mainwaring; Esmé Percy; Mrs. Fairbrother; Miss Desmond; Kate Fairbrother; Miss Darragh (this is then crossed out and a question mark added); Maud Sankey; Branningam. A copy of this typescript is now available in the Stanley Houghton Collection on microfilm, ref.M1034. Neither A. Nicoll English Drama 1900-1930, p.734, op.cit. nor Dr. Gaberthuel, p.11, op.cit. (see p.x ) are aware of its first production. They both give that date as 26 Sept. 1913.

31. See p.xvi for a comment on the availability of such reviews.

32. Contract in the Stanley Houghton Collection, dated 26 May 1913.

was £30 (£780 in 1981) with a 5% royalty on the gross weekly receipts up to £600 (£15,600 in 1981); 7½% for over £600 and 10% over £900 (£23,400 in 1981). Two interesting points now arise from this deal. The first concerns Percy (1887-1957), "*a distinguished English actor*", who had studied under Bernhardt, had been a member of both Benson's and Miss Horniman's Companies, worked with Granville-Barker and had been a personal friend of G.B. Shaw so much so that he became regarded as an authority on him in terms of theatrical production. For example, he was the first to stage the whole of Man and Superman including the Don Juan in Hell scene. In summary "*he had immense technical resources, a prodigious memory [and] an immensely flexible and sensitive voice*".<sup>(33)</sup> This pedigree appears to have been important. He had already acted in Houghton's Independent Means in September 1910 and in the first production of his Fancy Free (as Alfred) in November 1911.<sup>(34)</sup> Montague, in connection with the former, had commented that "*Percy's Edgar Forsyth ... brims and sparkles with the actor's humorous understanding of the part*".<sup>(35)</sup> In a period of poor reviews<sup>(36)</sup> Houghton must have warmed to this notice. Significantly Ginger was written during the very period of the production of Independent Means and it may well have been Houghton's intention to show his critics that they were using the wrong criterion to judge that type of play by writing yet another along similar lines, with Percy in mind to play the protagonist. Yet even then Houghton remained pessimistic, holding the

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33. O.C.T. pp.726-7.

34. The Works, Vol.3, p.309.

35. The Manchester Guardian, 27 Sept.1910, in Montague Collection, John Rylands University of Manchester Library (Deansgate).

36. See pp. 173, 177 *supra*.

play back for three years. Here the second point of interest arises: the contract referred to above, and whose typed royalty figures have been listed, were in fact changed: in black ink the estimated takings have been lowered by two-thirds across the board (£600 became £200 and £900 became £300). The implications of this are that whilst Houghton would still get his royalties the anticipated audiences were not expected to be large - even in Manchester where the play was eventually to be staged (see below). Moreover, the contract could only be renewed if the play survived "*not less than fifteen weeks*" in that year. These factors, along with the two mentioned earlier (p. 180 *supra*), may well have added to Houghton's uncertainty about the play and account for the relatively long period taken to complete it.

The inspiration behind the play was undoubtedly the novel Kipps: the story of a simple soul, (1905) by H.G. Wells. This was eventually dramatised under the same title by Wells and R. Besier in 1912,<sup>(37)</sup> but apparently Houghton's was better:

*a very much brighter entertainment than was Mr. Besier's version of the authentic "Kipps".*<sup>(38)</sup>

It was originally designated "*a comedy in four acts*" by Houghton in 1910<sup>(39)</sup> but it was staged as "*a sentimental farce*" in 1913.<sup>(40)</sup>

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37. See A. Nicoll, *op.cit.* p.1018.

38. Brighouse in The Manchester Guardian, 1 Dec. 1913, in Brighouse Collection. For comments on other works by H.G. Wells and Houghton's connection see Ch.11, p.378.

39. Both the MS. and the typescript carry this designation.

40. As recorded by A. Nicoll, *op.cit.* p.734.

Returning to the point made earlier (p.180) about the problem Houghton had with the name of his hero, it is now possible, with the availability of the Examiner of Plays' review, Houghton's plan of the play and the manuscript, to make an interesting deduction. He seems to have settled on the hero's sobriquet 'Ginger' without difficulty. However, the surname was more troublesome. In his synopsis notes one finds scribbled variously "*Mainwaring*" and "*Mannering*". Indeed, the first page of the synopsis has "*James Le Breton*" whilst the manuscript character page shows an alteration from "*Jamie Mainwaring*" to "*James Mainwaring*". Throughout the manuscript one finds examples of "*Ginger*" being written over "*Le Breton*" in pencil and then "*Mainwaring*" written over that in ink thus indicating a final decision: "*James Mainwaring*". Unfortunately for Houghton the problem did not end there. The Examiner of Plays' review carried an additional clause which unless acted upon would hold up the play's licence. Bearing the words "*subject to alteration*" written in blue pencil one finds:

*It might be as well to remind the Managers that there is an actual Mainwaring baronet, who might resent the use of his name.*

Whether Houghton or Percy or the Manager of the theatre made the change remains unknown. Whoever chose it could not have picked a more extreme opposite: Horace Botwright.<sup>(41)</sup> Interestingly, an identical 'censorship' was applied to Brighthouse who later noted his anger:

*It would appear that the Lord Chamberlain adds to his duty to the Royal Family a protectorship of the peerage.* (42)

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41. Gaiety Theatre programme for week beginning 24 Nov. 1913, in Manchester Central Reference Library, Theatre Collection, ref.Mal66.

42. *What I have had*, op.cit. p.86. In his play *Coincidence* (pub. 1929) he uses the name 'Lady Berners': there existed a Lord Berners. See also p.171 infra.

The play was taken by Percy along with Man and Superman to Hunstanton where the latter was performed on the Monday and Tuesday 17 and 18 July 1913, with Ginger on the Wednesday. The Lynn Advertiser (25 July 1913, p.5) merely reported that performances were held in front of "moderately large audiences". The next known performance was at the Theatre Royal, Halifax, on 26 September 1913.<sup>(43)</sup> It had been advertised the week before with a commentary about "the brilliant Company" producing it.<sup>(44)</sup> The reviewer on the night wrote of "the distinction" the theatre had of presenting a Houghton play before "a large audience". He concluded that whilst the play was "not brilliant" it was nonetheless "clever in its great simplicity", and furthermore the acting of Percy was excellent.<sup>(45)</sup>

The only other known performance was at the Gaiety but not by the Horniman Company as they were on tour in Oxford; Percy's Company was offered the theatre.<sup>(46)</sup> It was put on for a Saturday matinée on 29 November 1913.<sup>(47)</sup> Brighouse was sent by The Manchester Guardian to review it:

*Mr. Esmé Percy brought his brilliant programme to a close on Saturday afternoon with its most keenly anticipated item, and achieved one of those personal feats of virtuoso acting.*<sup>(48)</sup>

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- 43. The date wrongly given by A. Nicoll and Dr. Gaberthuel as the first production: see fn.30.
  - 44. Halifax Courier, 19 Sept.1913, p.4.
  - 45. *ibid.* 27 Sept.1913, p.7.
  - 46. Pogson, p.204.
  - 47. Manchester Gaiety and Midland Theatre Programmes : Chronological List, Vol.4, Manchester Central Reference Library, Theatre Collection, ref. Mal66.
  - 48. 1 Dec.1913, in Brighouse Collection. Surprisingly he stated that Ginger was written before The Younger Generation in this review. The other plays performed that week were: The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith (Pinero); The River (C. Sandeman); Joy (Galsworthy); The Orangeman (St. John Ervine); The Awakening Woman (H.M. Richardson: first production); The Passer-By (R. Wilson).

Percy's acting was one of the few positive things that Brighouse had to say about the play:

*Ginger is so much a product of collaboration between actor and author that one can hardly say where one begins and the other ends.*

Indeed, this unity was so noticeable that the play

*had a tendency to flag whenever Mr. Percy left the stage.*

Bearing in mind what I have already said about Houghton's confidence in Percy, the above quotation could not be more apposite. Moreover,

*his acting had the true abandon and vital zest which alone can carry a farce to victory*

seems to vindicate Houghton's belief in himself.

This review by Brighouse is fuller than that given in his Introduction (pp.xlvi-vii) and does Houghton more justice but it is perhaps the latter alone which is read. Indeed, in The Manchester Guardian review he came close to realizing Houghton's intention:

*To entertain was ... all that on this occasion [he] had had in mind, and it is a demonstration of his complete knowledge of the theatre rather than a blemish in his play that its jokes are often obvious; its wit a trifle cheap; he knew that audiences laughed none the less heartily on that account.*

If one recollects the point I made earlier about Independent Means and the view of it by Dixon Scott,<sup>(49)</sup> one sees this play in a fairer light than that picked up by the critics. For example, Brighouse in The Manchester Guardian (1 Dec.1913, op.cit), added that "*the disadvantage of writing about London while living in Manchester is that one is dependent upon hearsay for the habits of the Londoners*", and in his Introduction he labours the point: "*the scene is London, where at that*

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49. See Ch.3 , p.83 and fn.51 infra.

time Houghton had not lived, and the aristocratic persons at any rate are not drawn from life" (p.xlvii). Similarly The Stage, reviewing the dramatic year of 1913, saw Ginger as a play in which Houghton "fell away from the standard of his first plays", with the explanation being that "he was not writing of the life that he knew".<sup>(50)</sup> What the critics missed, and what Brighouse failed to highlight fully in his Introduction (remembering that he also excluded the play from The Works) was the play's real intention:

*deliberately theatrical, unaffectedly artificial ....  
immense fun ... pulling off all the old tricks, the  
approved coups and curtains ... streaking in ...  
fat sentiment, watching all the fascinating pulleys  
and levers of stageland responding ... dutifully and  
solemnly to his touch.* (51)

Of Independent Means, it will be recalled (p.83), Houghton stated that he had set out to make people laugh; Ginger, in my opinion, had the same genesis.

Technically the play was an advance for Houghton in terms of production. Apart from the expected skilled dialogue, he had staged Act 2 behind a stall at a bazaar in order to bring together the various characters from differing social backgrounds. Brighouse in the above newspaper review noted that the scene was "an ingenious variant upon the hotel idea", which had up to then been "too frequently employed to bring together differing strata of society".<sup>(52)</sup> Finally, in the context

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50. 18 Dec.1913, H.C. Vol.M.

51. Dixon Scott, Men of Letters, op.cit. pp.167-8. This view is applied to Independent Means by Scott (see fn.49 supra). I believe it applies equally to Ginger.

52. The Director of the Bolton Octagon Theatre, on reading the typescript, commented that such a technique would be successful even on today's stage (1982). Interestingly, Dr. Gaberthuel (p.156), in a footnote, draws a comparison between My Fair Lady/Pygmalion: Eliza Doolittle's first appearance in the house of Prof. Higgins and Act 3 of Ginger have strong comical resemblances.



of all Houghton's Plays, the comment made by Brighouse in The Manchester Guardian that "*if we rank 'Ginger' with the plays of no account, we rate it highly amongst them*" now takes on a much more positive meaning.

It now remains for this chapter to consider one other play, The Hillarys. Its inclusion here means that the chronological development used in this thesis has to be interrupted and a move made to late 1911 thereby omitting four plays (see footnote 1 of this chapter). These will be discussed after this section. Its location here is because, like the other two, it has differences which single it out.

Brighouse not only excluded it from The Works but even refused to mention it by name in his Introduction. All he would say was:

*After 'Hindle Wakes' Houghton wrote in collaboration, as a kind of busman's holiday, a light farce, which has not been acted. (53)*

I am assuming that he meant The Hillarys since Houghton only ever wrote in collaboration with one other, besides Brighouse. (54) This play carries the authorship as follows:

*The Hillarys*  
*A comedy in Three Acts*  
*by*  
*Stanley Houghton*  
*and*  
*Harold Brighouse (55)*

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53. Introduction, p.liv.

54. See Ch. 2 , p. 43 for details of Frank. G. Nasmith.

55. Two typescripts of the play exist: L.C.P. Vol.10 and a bound copy in the Brighouse Collection, Eccles Public Library.

Dr. Gaberthuel<sup>(56)</sup> has been misled by Brighouse over this play and has taken another sentence in the Introduction ("*He made in Paris notes of a country house comedy*", p.lviii) to refer to The Hillarys and has therefore drawn two wrong conclusions: the date of the play's composition and a belief that Houghton died before it was completed. What Brighouse was referring to was in fact an unfinished play which has only recently come to light: its existence was unknown to Dr. Gaberthuel. It is entitled The Weather and was probably Houghton's last play: it, like The Hillarys, is a country house comedy (see Ch.9 for details).

Before moving on to look at the play the two wrong conclusions drawn by Dr. Gaberthuel need to be cleared up. It is my contention that the play was written by Houghton and Brighouse around Christmas 1911 because Hindle Wakes was completed by December 1911 and Brighouse noted that Houghton "*for the first six months of 1912, took ... a complete rest from writing*" (p.liv.). Moreover, by the 20 July 1912 Houghton was able to state in an interview that he had written thirteen plays. Excluding those which were not staged publicly (both before and after this date) and Marriages in the Making (1909) for reasons already given (see Ch. 3 , p. 85 ), this total, if it includes The Hillarys, is accurate (see Appendices). In fact the interview continued with Houghton acknowledging his only partners in writing:

*one [play] in collaboration with Mr. Harold Brighouse  
and two with the help of Mr. Frank Nasmith. (57)*

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56. op.cit. pp.11 and 175 (see p.x supra for a comment on this Ph.D. thesis).

57. Manchester Courier, p.7. No other play by Houghton and Brighouse can be traced: The Hillarys is their only collaboration.

On completion the two playwrights must have agreed to pursue it no further and to put it to one side. Houghton had done this before with an early play of his, Adam Moss : Bachelor (c.1902), a play, incidentally with similarities to The Hillarys (see Ch.2. p.39).

The above facts therefore negate the belief that Houghton died before the play was finished. In fact several critics believed that that was the case. For example:

*the untimely death of Stanley Houghton left ... very little more than one of them [acts] completed .... Brighouse has added the rest. (58)*

Nowhere has Brighouse ever denied or affirmed the belief. William Archer in his review of the play never mentioned anything other than that *"it was the work of two Manchester playwrights - one of them alas! dead."*<sup>(59)</sup> In 1915 Brighouse wrote his own country-house comedy, The Road to Raebury.

The copy of the play in the Brighouse Collection has many hand-written alterations but none are in the style of Houghton or Brighouse. They are most probably stage-manager's alterations - as happened with Trust the People (1912) (see Ch.9). The title page carries the addresses of both playwrights but Houghton's father's name replaces that of his son's. Interestingly, the copy lodged with the Lord Chamberlain has the address 2 Athol Rd, Alexandra Park, Manchester crossed out and the address taken by the Houghtons shortly after their son's death written over it (191 Withington Road, Whalley Range, Manchester).<sup>(60)</sup>

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58. An unidentified clipping dated 4 May 1915, in Brighouse Collection.

59. Star, 3 June 1915, Brighouse Collection.

60. Both addresses are discussed on p. 9 and p. 78 respectively.

Both copies also bear the name James B. Pinker, Literary Agent. His name on the cover would have been almost a prestige symbol of the day. He (1863-1922) was regarded as a literary agent of high international repute<sup>(61)</sup> having been involved with such writers as Arnold Bennett; Joseph Conrad; Thomas Hardy; Henry James; D.H. Lawrence; Robert Louis Stevenson; H.G. Wells. Conrad coined the epithet "*the Pinker of Agents*" to describe him.<sup>(62)</sup>

The play was submitted to the Lord Chamberlain for licence on 21 April 1915, some time after Houghton's death, for production on 30 April 1915.<sup>(63)</sup> Fortunately the Examiner of Plays' review is available and it is of value for three reasons. Firstly it provides a useful summary of the plot; secondly it hints at the play's possible origin; and thirdly it shows how close the play came to being censored in part.<sup>(64)</sup>

*The old story of the young man wanting to marry a girl disapproved of by his family and his uncle intervening. But there the likeness to "Pendennis" ends. (65)*  
*Ronald Hillary wants to marry his sister's governess, Rose, and his family objects on account of the ancient blood of the Hillarys', though Rose is a lady and charming. So his uncle Pat, a bachelor experienced with women, is called in and tries to flirt with Rose to disillusion Ronald. But he falls in love himself and when both he and the girl announce their departure the rest think - Ronald's mother frankly relieved - that they are eloping together and Pat and Ronald have a great row, but Pat asks Rose to marry him and she refuses (1) to marry Ronald having seen what real*

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61. James Hepburn (Ed), Letters of Arnold Bennett: Letters to J.B. Pinker, Vol.1, O U P, 1966, pp.22-28.
62. *ibid.* p.28. When he died his business was dispersed. The Society of Authors informed me that it has no way of tracing any file which may have been kept on the play/playwrights: Letter 27 April 1982.
63. L.C.P. Vol.10, No.3345.
64. Interestingly, Brighouse about this period also came close to censorship with two more of his plays: Garside's Career and Hobson's Choice: see What I have had, op.cit. pp.85-86.
65. The History of Pendennis by Thackeray (published serially 1848-50). As noted by the Examiner, the similarity stems from the early part only.

love is and (2) to marry Pat because she doesn't love him. So the family is satisfied. An irascible grandfather, a dear old grandmother, a mother who writes novels and a cheeky child make up the cast. The play is rather conventional but well-written and amusing and with no harm in it.

Recommended for Licence

G.S. Street

P.S. The only possible line to object to is Act I, page 34 "Get married when it's wet; it'll give you something to do indoors", but it would be out of tone with the play to think it is not meant innocently.

Milton Rosmer<sup>(66)</sup> and his wife Irene Rooke, both ex Gaiety actors, took the play for its first production to Kelly's Theatre, Paradise Street, Liverpool. The Liverpool Courier saw the play as having "a theme which is handled with rare subtlety, cleverness and finesse", with the dialogue being, "smart and telling ... candid to a degree". Interestingly, the paper also recorded that "not too much opportunity [had] occurred for rehearsal" (1 May 1915, p.8). The Liverpool Daily Post of the same date (p.8) commented on yet "another decided success ... a brisk, clever and amusing comedy". It noted a reminiscence of Hindle Wakes and "strong traces of the genius of Stanley Houghton". From there the play went to the Theatre Royal, Manchester, a venue omitted both by Dr. Gaberthuel and Nicoll. Only the presence of three unidentified clippings in the Brighthouse Collection attest to this - all dated 4 May 1915. One reviewer noted the play's ending: "one hardly expects to find a development in the direction of a somewhat puzzling psychological problem towards the end". Another, whilst stating that "the reception accorded it last night ... augurs well for its future", it being "in many respects ... the best of all

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66. See Ch.7, p.225 for biographical details.

*Houghton's comedies*", added that there was an indefinable difference between it and other Houghton plays: it *"plainly shows signs of collaboration"*, with Brighouse's *"restraining influence [having] obviously had its effects on the dialogue"*. More importantly: *"There is a true Houghton touch in the finish of the play - an end surrounded with doubts and possibilities"*. Indeed, the end is reminiscent of Hindle Wakes whereby Fanny, having a choice of a similar nature does exactly what Rose Tomlin did - rejects a financially secure marriage after a careful decision of the effect it would have on her future. Interestingly the review added that Brighouse was in the audience but declined the repeated requests for a speech. There were many curtain calls. Finally, the other comment from a different clipping (still unidentified) bears note if one recalls Houghton's dramatic interest of looking afresh at the everyday (see Ch.3 , p.79 ): despite being a country-house comedy it was still seen to be *"poised delicately ... on the border-line of reality"*.

On 2 June 1915 the play reached the Criterion Theatre, London.<sup>(67)</sup> The Daily Telegraph (3 June 1915, p.7) noted that the play was, *"we understand, left unfinished"* and were then quick to point out that the collaboration produced an *"effect ... not very happy"*. Only the solution at the end redeemed it by bringing *"reality upon the scene"*. The Sunday Times (6 June 1915, Brighouse Collection) praised its dialogue:

*What daring challenges to convention, both in expression and in thoughts! What coruscation of phrases aptly coined, what nimbleness of repartee, competing with the best French!*

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67. A. Nicoll, English Drama 1900-1930, op.cit. p.734.

Apart from these productions and reviews nothing more has been discovered about the play except that on 8 June 1915 a contract was taken out between Houghton's agent (The International Copyright Bureau) and the African Theatres' Trust Ltd. for one year "to produce ... *THE HILLARYS* by Stanley Houghton and Harold Brighouse in South Africa". (68)

Apart from the discussion of The Hillarys above, this thesis has generally progressed chronologically. As such it is now possible to see that the year 1909 ended with the composition of The Master of the House, thus leaving Ginger to be the only play written in 1910. In 1911, however, Houghton was to more than make up for it by writing five plays, including Hindle Wakes. He was also to commence an interesting experiment: the development of two one-act plays into two full-length plays. This will be the subject of Chapter 7.

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68. Contract in Stanley Houghton Collection.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT AND THE PERFECT CURE  
FANCY FREE AND PARTNERS

1911 was a prolific year for Houghton: five plays; three back-page articles; nine play reviews; seventeen book reviews; eleven Miscellany articles, and all in his spare time.<sup>(1)</sup> It was also an interesting year in terms of dramatic development: two one-act plays written that year were subsequently developed into two full-length plays (three acts). As such it will be convenient to discuss them in pairs despite the fact that one of the longer plays was written in 1912. Brighouse's view that this "*use of a one-act play as a sort of studio-sketch for a future full-length version*"<sup>(2)</sup> gives little indication of the interesting history of these pairs.

The first of these pairs was The Fifth Commandment, written in March 1911.<sup>(3)</sup> The title refers of course to the Commandment "*Honour thy father and thy mother*" (Exodus 20, v.12) and it is almost certain that Houghton quoted it in full on the manuscript although it does not appear in either The Works (Vol.3, p.73) or Five One-Act Plays (French, 1913). My contention is based on the fact that the words "*Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee*" are to be found as the subtitle on a typed prompt copy left by Miss Horniman.<sup>(4)</sup> The manuscript has not been located.

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1. See Appendices, 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 respectively.
  2. Introduction, p.xlvii.
  3. *ibid.*
  4. Now in the British Theatre Association Library, 9 Fitzroy Sq., London. There are four others: See Ch.3. fn.79.



The play itself was not acted in this country for a further three years, although it was performed in Chicago in 1913.<sup>(5)</sup> Brighthouse maintains that this was because Houghton withdrew it from Miss Horniman, despite her intention to perform it, since *"he had since written, in The Perfect Cure, a long play on the same subject"*.<sup>(6)</sup> This, I believe, was not the case and I will develop the point soon. It was eventually submitted to the Lord Chamberlain for licence for production at the Gaiety in July 1914 (Vol.24, No.2838). Interestingly, the submission was the published Five One-Act Plays and not a typescript.

The idea for the play may well have been suggested by Molière's Le Malade Imaginaire (1673), particularly if one recalls Houghton's great interest in French literature (see p.26). Molière's plays had at the time been staged in Manchester. For example, in 1909 the Manchester Courier reviewed a *"special performance of Le Misanthrope"* (1666), whilst the Manchester Evening News rejoiced in the chances given to the City for *"studying first hand the language and methods of the French stage"*. Even the Gaiety played host to Molière's L'Avare (1668): *"the audience..was generous in its appreciation [with] many curtains"*.<sup>(7)</sup> Apart from the similarity of the basic theme (the parental use of an offspring for selfish motives), Houghton's play also has another echo of Molière's: in the latter Molière actually makes fun of himself and his plays thus:

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5. See Constance D'Arcy Mackay, The Little Theatre in the United States, Henry Holt and Co. 1917, p.108. Brighthouse also mentions this venue, p.xlvii.

6. Introduction, p.xlvii.

7. Both dated 10 Feb. The last is the Manchester Courier, 9 Feb. All are in H.C. Vol.C.

Béralde: ... I should have liked to be able to get you away from the error you are in and to amuse you, to take you to see one of the comedies of Molière ...

Argan: He is an impertinent creature your Molière with his comedies .... Let's not talk about that man any longer, brother, because it gets me in a bad temper ...

(Act III, scene 3).

In Houghton one finds:

Bob: .... The boss has given me a couple of free tickets for the theatre ...

Nelly: How lovely. Are they for the Royal? That's Fred Terry and Julia Neilson.

Bob: No, they're for the Gaiety.

Nelly: Oh, the Gaiety. (Her tone is disappointed).

Bob: But they say it's very funny all the same. By one of these local authors ...

(The Works, Vol 3, p.81)

Whilst Houghton never acknowledged Molière as he did de Maupassant, a connection was made, albeit in terms of humour, by the Manchester Courier headline on the morning of Houghton's death. It read:

"Manchester's Molière: Death of Mr. Stanley Houghton". (11 Dec. 1913, p.7.).

The plot was basically straightforward, as the Examiner of Plays' review shows:

*A painful and I hope exaggerated little study of parental selfishness. Mrs. Mountain, a really healthy woman, makes a slave of her daughter on the pretence of being an invalid. The daughter puts off her marriage continually and exasperates her young man until he can stand it no longer. The mother is, however, scared off herself when a prospective suitor changes his mind on hearing she is an invalid. Depressing but not ill-written.*

(G.S. Street, 8 July 1914).

Molière's play involved Argan, a hypochondriac, who decided to marry his daughter to a doctor and to leave his money to his second wife rather than to the children of his first. The fuller length version of The Fifth Commandment replaces the mother with a father, as will be seen later. The two works remain essentially separate despite these minor, if not insignificant, similarities.

The first performance of the play in England was seven months after the playwright's death. Iden Payne presented a "*Stanley Houghton Week*" at the Gaiety beginning 13 July 1914. He divided the week as follows: Monday, Wednesday and Saturday was The Old Testament and the New as a curtain raiser to The Younger Generation, whilst Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday (Matinée) saw The Fifth Commandment<sup>(8)</sup> as a curtain raiser to Independent Means. Monkhouse attended on behalf of The Manchester Guardian and although he praised the "*laudable enterprise*" of showing some of Houghton's earlier works he was worried because he thought that the playwright would be "*misjudged through them*". He saw both Independent Means and The Fifth Commandment as evidence of a developing rather than an accomplished playwright. Of the latter he wrote:

*this subject showed that he was still rather at a loss for good comic material .... He gives us here a conventional piece of domesticity of tolerable skill and effectiveness.*

Furthermore,

*the actors were able to do it justice without any great call upon their powers.*

In conclusion he wrote that both plays were "*boyish accomplishments that Houghton had left far behind*".<sup>(9)</sup>

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8. The licence for The Fifth Commandment was for a performance on 13 July. A. Nicoll, however, is correct in giving its first performance as the 14. (op.cit. p.734).

9. 15 July 1914, H.C. Vol.N.

Edward Storer on the other hand read the play and concluded that it was

*the most remarkable instance of [an] obsession [with] the bitter animus against fathers and mothers as domestic authorities,*

and that the play's very title was,

*saturated with meaning that awakens curiosity as to whether its purpose is serious or ironical.* (10)

He in fact concluded that it was a "savage satire". Perhaps a more accurate view was that given by Dixon Scott who saw the play not only as did Monkhouse above but as something more: "a deft impersonation[s]", that is not as a self-flattering imitation of Shaw, Harkin or Wilde but rather a deliberate undertaking with the definite purpose of "testing his strength by the stiffest contemporary standards". (11) This precise acknowledgement will be developed shortly. Meanwhile Scott saw the experiment as a success, particularly in terms of the dialogue and its preparation for the play Hindle Wakes. Brighthouse saw it as merely a "studio-sketch for a future full-length version" (pxlvii). Unfortunately for Houghton the reception of this full-length version was to be disastrous.

At this point it is necessary to move forward a few months in order to follow the development of The Fifth Commandment into a full-length play. As such a consideration of the plays written in between, including Hindle Wakes, will be deferred.

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10. The British Review, Vol.IV. No.3, Dec.1913, p.420.

11. Men of Letters, op.cit. pp.170-72.

The composition of The Perfect Cure, a comedy in three acts, was rapid: ten days.<sup>(12)</sup> It was also the last play written by Houghton in Manchester as he moved almost immediately to London. As a play it has a curious history.

For the first six months of 1912 Houghton took "*partly deliberately, partly through ill-health, a complete rest from writing*".<sup>(13)</sup> During June Hindle Wakes was first presented and became an immediate success whereupon several approaches were made to Houghton not only to stage Hindle Wakes but also to commission new plays. One such commission led to a contract between Houghton and Cyril Maude (the latter meanwhile allowing Hindle Wakes to be staged at his theatre, The Playhouse) on 5 July 1912 whereby "*the Manager gives and the Author hereby accepts a commission to write a three or four act play*" and provide "*a scenario of the play not later than August 1 1912*", and then "*deliver the complete manuscript ... not later than January 1 1913*".<sup>(14)</sup> For this Houghton was paid £50 (£1,300 in 1981) on account with a further £50 on receipt of the manuscript. The final part of the contract was to be significant: "*The Manager shall decide within ten days ... whether he accepts the play for production or not ... at a first class London West End Theatre for a run not later than September 30 1913*". Royalties were to be 5% on £600 (£15,600 in 1981); 7½% on the next £400 (£10,400 in 1981); and 10% in excess of £1,000 (£26,000 in 1981).

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12. Introduction, p.liv.

13. *ibid.*

14. Contract in Stanley Houghton Collection. No title is mentioned.

Houghton also signed at least three other contracts for new plays in 1912 and therefore must have not only decided to cease full-time employment and move to London (the success of Hindle Wakes being a crucial factor in this decision) but also to write quickly for the Maude Contract. With speed being of the essence what could be better than the development of an unacted play, The Fifth Commandment, into the required three or four act play? Within ten days it emerged as The Cure. This theory is made all the more plausible when one considers that Houghton held the Maude Contract in high esteem:

*I fixed up to write Cyril Maude a long play; & signed my name on the wall of his dressing room, as is the manner of notable persons when they go down there. (15)*

The autographing was equally prestigious, carrying hundreds of celebrity signatures such as Lena Ashwell; C. Hayden Coffin; Charles Frohman; Charles Hawtrey; H.A. Jones; Baden Powell; Fred Terry; Irene Vanbrugh; Lewis Waller. (16)

Cyril Maude (1862-1951) was a renowned actor-manager who had a long successful stage career including Royal Command performances at Balmoral and Sandringham. (17) From joint management of the Haymarket with Frederick Harrison, he moved in 1905 to the Avenue Theatre (later The Playhouse), London. Houghton, however, had been warned about the man and his promises. In a letter to Miss Horniman discussing the success of Hindle Wakes, Houghton added:

*Hawtrey says Maude has no pluck [sic] & will not risk anything. (18)*

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15. Letter to Monkhouse, 2 July 1912, A N M 10.
  16. A photograph of the board with signatures appears in Cyril Maude, Behind the Scenes with Cyril Maude by Himself, Murray, 1927, between pp.112-113.
  17. O.C.T. p.627.
  18. 13 Aug. 1912, in Cade Collection.

Sure enough that was to be the case, much to Houghton's annoyance:

*Maude has refused 'The Cure'! He is no good at all.  
All charm and fatuousness, between ourselves. (19)*

However, it seems as if Maude, on refusing the play, which the contract allowed him to do, offered Houghton yet another contract, but:

*I am writing Bouchier a long play; (20) Maude can wait,  
as he doesn't like 'The Cure'. I think I shall place  
it all right with some one of better taste. (21)*

That some one was to be the above Frederick Harrison who assumed total management of the Haymarket from 1905 until his death in 1926. (22)

Harrison, it will be recalled, was deeply interested in the production of The Younger Generation. (23)

On 11 November 1912 a formal agreement was reached between Harrison and Houghton (the latter still remained the sole proprietor of the play)

*for a period of five years ... in London ... America  
and Canada and the exclusive right to represent ...  
the said Play in Great Britain and Ireland and the  
British Colonies and Possessions and the United States  
of America. (24)*

The fee was £300 (£7,800 in 1981) paid on signing, with a further £150 (£3,900 in 1981) on account of royalties in Great Britain and £150 in America and Canada. The London obligation was "a run in the evening bill at a West End London Theatre". Interestingly, the contract

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19. Houghton to Monkhouse, 26 Sept. 1912, A N M 10.

20. Arthur Bouchier, actor-manager of the Garrick Theatre (see also Ch.9). The play was probably Trust the People.

21. Houghton to Monkhouse, 26 Sept. 1912, op.cit.

22. O.C.T., p.436.

23. See p.162.

24. Contract in Stanley Houghton Collection.

concluded with the words, "*within one year after the end of the run of 'The Younger Generation'*", which was running that very month at the Haymarket. Harrison obviously realised the success he had on his hands with The Younger Generation and must have hoped for a similar success with The Cure. Harrison did not, however, sign the Contract for the Haymarket but on behalf of the English Drama Company Limited.<sup>(25)</sup> He submitted the play to the Lord Chamberlain on 13 June 1913<sup>(26)</sup> for production at the Apollo, Shaftesbury Avenue. On the title covers of all three acts of the manuscript are the words, "*This play is the property of Frederick Harrison, Haymarket Theatre, London*" in red ink. Moreover, the title covers of Acts 2 and 3 carry the name "*The Cure*" whereas Act 1 reads "*The Perfect Cure*".

The Apollo had opened in 1901 but was "*never the permanent home of great management*".<sup>(27)</sup> Nevertheless, "*it [had] been a consistently successful theatre*".<sup>(28)</sup> Harrison must have engaged (Sir) Charles Hawtrey to produce and take part in the play fairly quickly. The choice was no accident. Hawtrey (1858-1923), an actor-manager, had a reputation as an outstanding actor, for which he was eventually knighted.<sup>(29)</sup> Even before this choice Hawtrey had been known to Houghton. In connection with Hindle Wakes, Houghton had written to Miss Horniman that

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25. I have been unable to find any information on this Company, even in The British Library.

26. L.C.P. Vol.21, No.1753.

27. O.C.T., p.31. The Manager at this period was Tom Buffen Davis (from 1904-20). See Diana Howard, London Theatres and Music Halls 1850-1950, The Library Association, 1970).

28. O.C.T., p.31.

29. *ibid.* pp.433-34. He was knighted in 1922.



*Charles Hawtrey believes so much in the play that he sent a friend (the actor Reginald Owen) up here (30) to see me about it. He wants to take up your company in it if by any chance Maude loses heart & wants to stop .... He will find a theatre and put it on as soon as Maude tires. (31)*

Despite this early connection between Houghton and Hawtrey, I believe that Brighouse's contention that The Perfect Cure was "made to measure for Charles Hawtrey"<sup>(32)</sup> is erroneous, not only because of the above evidence but also because Hawtrey's speciality, which was well established, was to lead to the play's early closure:

*He excelled in parts where he had to tell lies, which he did with such ease and brilliance that he afforded the audience, in secret, the most unbounded delight. He was a much better actor than his public would allow him to be, since he was so popular in what were known as 'Hawtrey' parts that he seldom had the opportunity to play anything else.*

Indeed,

*in his particular line he had no equal. (33)*

These last few words were to be central to the play's downfall as will be seen shortly.

The Examiner of Plays' review is fortunately to hand and bears quoting in part for two reasons. Firstly its inaccuracies:

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30. Houghton was on holiday in Criccieth. See p.258 for a note on Owen.
31. 13 Aug.1912, in Cade Collection.
32. What I have had, op.cit. p.58.
33. O.C.T. pp.434. This article by W. Macqueen-Pope (1888-1960), English actor, manager and theatre historian (see O.C.T. p.597) begins more ominously: "he always wore a moustache (on the only occasion when he shaved it off the play [unidentified] failed)". Vincent Cray in The Perfect Cure wore only "little patches of side-whiskers" (The Works, Vol.2. p.190).

Vincent Gray [sic] is a widower living alone with his daughter 'Madge'. He makes her do everything for him - in fact, though naturally amiable, he has become selfish, peevish & a *malade imaginaire* through being too well looked after by her. He refuses to let her marry 'Jack Probyn' [sic] because he thinks he will be less comfortable without her to attend to him. 'The Cure' is the process by which a sprightly & energetic middle-aged lady - 'Mrs. Scandrett' [sic] knocks the selfishness out of him, obtains his consent to the young people's union & finally rewards him with her hand ....

Gray should be Cray; Jack should be Tom, and Mrs. should be Miss.

Secondly, it was written by Charles E. Brookfield and in order to make a useful point it will be necessary to briefly mention his history.

Brookfield (1857-1913) who had been an actor and playwright, was appointed Examiner of Plays from 1912.<sup>(34)</sup> From 1909 he had been a Joint Examiner, earning the title "*the sharpest-tongued cynic of his time*" by eminent contemporaries.<sup>(35)</sup> As Examiner he was required to read, on average, two plays per day.<sup>(36)</sup> However, his appointment coincided with the publication of an article he wrote criticizing the barrenness of modern English drama, singling out Shaw, Barker, Galsworthy and other avant-garde playwrights ("*misguided dramatic aspirants*") who "*brayed*" their views on social problems "*of their own projection*".<sup>(37)</sup> Indeed, his appointment was received by the theatrical world with scorn and worry and was actually criticised in the Commons.<sup>(38)</sup> It is therefore all the more interesting that his review of Houghton's play

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34. Samuel Hynes, The Edwardian Turn of Mind, op.cit. p.364.

35. Richard Findlater, Banned: a review of theatrical censorship in Britain, Macgibbon and Kee, 1967, p.115.

36. Samuel Hynes, op.cit. p.215. Thus 1890 = 297 plays; 1900 = 466; 1910 = 604.

37. Richard Findlater, op.cit. p.115.

38. Samuel Hynes, op.cit. pp.239-40. Brookfield will be mentioned later in connection with the first of the next pair of plays: Fancy Free (see p.211).

should end with the words: *"Quite a pleasant, wholesome little play (for a change)"*, and be recommended for licence. Taken in the above context and put alongside Dixon Scott's view of The Fifth Commandment (p. 199 supra), one is left with the impression that whilst the one-act play (and therefore the full-length version) was in the manner of contemporary drama it still had its own mark of individuality: Houghton never became a slave of imitation.

Returning to The Perfect Cure one finds that when rehearsals were under way Houghton, despite having moved to Paris, was invited to them:

*Hawtrey writes me to be at rehearsal tomorrow, but I won't be. I think I'll go over Thursday or Friday.* (39)

As a play Houghton had *"a strong affection"*<sup>(40)</sup> for it. The Manchester Programme welcomed it the day before curtain-up as *"a new three-act comedy from the pen of Stanley Houghton"*. (16 June 1913, p.8)

Everything seemed to be going well until suddenly, after only four nights, the play was taken off. Two main reasons were offered for this, both of which were dubious. One was that the play had only been planned to run four nights anyway because of previous managerial arrangements.<sup>(41)</sup> The other was perhaps more debatable and certainly more written about: it centred around the belief that Houghton could not write to order successfully, particularly when out of his own environment. Thus J.T. Grein wrote :

*When [he] came to live in London and tried to widen his sphere of observation, his work failed .... [However] his 'Perfect Cure' ... was worthy of a better fate.* (42)

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39. To Monkhouse, n.d. A N M 12.

40. Introduction, p.liv.

41. See for example, the Manchester Evening News, 28 June 1913, H.C. Vol.L.

42. Cameo's of Playwrights and Players 1914-21, Privately printed, 1921, p.6.

James Agate wrote:

*London was no stimulus to Houghton; he had exchanged a world he knew intimately for one he knew not at all, and he was at a loss, it seemed to me, for material.* (43)

The Stage, reviewing the dramatic year of 1913, saw The Perfect Cure as an example of Houghton's falling away "from the standard of his first plays", the explanation being that "he was not writing of the life that he knew, but was handling conventional subjects of the theatre".<sup>(44)</sup> The truth was perhaps a lot simpler. Whilst it must have saddened Houghton, he knew that in this particular play (which was written in Manchester and not London) he had achieved a success: a technical development which carried through three acts with only four characters and "whose geniality is only to be compared with that of the third act of 'Ginger'".<sup>(45)</sup> His disappointment, however, was noted, perhaps too dramatically:

*what agony of mind he suffered when a play from his pen was withdrawn from the London stage after a few days' run, only certain of his more perceptive friends realised, and even from them he masked his pain by a brave show, not of stoic indifference, but of smiling defiance. Yet he could not quite conceal the anger that flamed at moments in his eyes or the pain that trembled on his smiling lips,* (46)

and,

*it broke his heart; it filled his sensitive mind with fear of London; he fled - and for a time disappointment blighted his creative power.* (47)

The fact is that the majority of these views are one-sided: Houghton was disappointed; he did leave to live in Paris; and he did, after a

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43. The Manchester Playgoer, Vol 2, No.1, p.25.

44. 18 Dec.1913, H.C. Vol.M.

45. Introduction, p.liv.

46. A.L. Ellis, The English Review, Jan.1914, pp.274-5.

47. J.T. Grein, op.cit. p.6.

fashion, cease writing plays of the order of Hindle Wakes. However, he was also a dying man increasingly suffering from physical pain and he was also reconsidering his own career as a dramatist, having a stronger inclination towards the novel. All these factors will be taken up in Chapters 10 and 11. For the moment it will be sufficient to quote his business manager who wrote in The Sunday Times shortly after Houghton's death that

*on the morning of the announcement of the withdrawal of 'The Perfect Cure', Mr. Charles Frohman showed his pluck and confidence in my client by giving him an excellent commission for a new play; and my late friend, during his long illness, derived great encouragement and consolation from this proof of confidence on the part of a great manager and a great man. (48)*

The last word must go to somebody who really knew. In a small paragraph in the Daily Dispatch (11 Dec 1913, p.7), there is a tribute by Charles Hawtrey. The final paragraph is most revealing:

*The only play of his which I produced, 'The Perfect Cure' was not cordially accepted by the public. Even so, that was perhaps not the fault of the author, but more owing to the environment in which his comedy was placed. The public would not accept one in what is termed a "character" part, and in "Vincent Gray" [sic] I was breaking away from the path of tradition which it has elected to choose for me.*

Relate this to the view expressed by MacQueen-Pope (p.204supra) and it would seem that the play closed not because of any failure on the author's part but rather Hawtrey's. So despite Brighouse's point that Houghton considered it badly cast except for Hawtrey,<sup>(49)</sup> it would seem that the play had potential - but in different circumstances. And

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48. 21 Dec.1913, H.C. Vol.M. Frohman is discussed later in the thesis (p.388). He has been mentioned earlier, however: Ch.5, p.165.

49. Introduction, p.liv.

indeed it did. Later in that year Edwin T. Heys took it on tour in the provinces. Heys had been Secretary to the Garrick Society of Stockport: a renowned society which had championed the repertory idea,<sup>(50)</sup> and led Iden Payne to invite Heys to be the Gaiety's first business manager. He was regarded as a person "*capable of doing the job well, who ... stood apart from the ordinary commercial theatre and had not hardened into any routine groove*" in that he was "*conversant and sympathetic towards the 'new' drama*".<sup>(51)</sup> Heys left the Gaiety solely to take Hindle Wakes on tour, having first obtained the rights from Miss Horniman (see Ch.8, p.287). His departure left a gap which was "*never adequately filled*".<sup>(52)</sup> Indeed,

*Heys is entitled to share with Miss Horniman and Payne the credit for the success of the Gaiety in the early years.*<sup>(53)</sup>

One of his strengths was the belief in ensemble acting, a technique central to Houghton's drama, and particularly The Perfect Cure, since its success, as noted, depended on only four characters. Heys wrote an article in 1909 outlining his views. Writing of Payne's method of directing, he argued that "*the producer behind the scenes is generally more responsible than the artists for the excellence of the latter's acting*", meaning their continual playing together (that is their ability to act independently and yet in ensemble) to produce "*thoughtful consideration [of] problems of real life and environment instead of the stage dummies of romanticists, or the impossible happenings of melodrama*".<sup>(54)</sup>

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50. P.P. Howe, The Repertory Theatre: a record and a criticism, Secker, 1910, pp.63-64.

51. Pogson, p.29.

52. *ibid.* p.137.

53. *ibid.* See also The Manchester Guardian, 20 Aug.1907 or Manchester City News, 31 Aug.1907, H.C. Vol.A.

54. Bowdonia, Nov.1909, a local magazine, in H.C. Vol.D.

It is not surprising then that the Manchester Evening News on hearing of Heys' intentions proclaimed that The Perfect Cure "*has attracted the attention of a well-known manager who sees possibilities in it in spite of its surprisingly short run ... at the Apollo*".<sup>(55)</sup> At its first showing in the provinces it succeeded: "*recently presented in the provinces for the first time at Hastings*" it "*met with an enthusiastic reception*".<sup>(56)</sup> Heys later directed the farewell season at the Gaiety (on its closure) beginning 16 May 1920 with a week of Stanley Houghton plays.<sup>(57)</sup>

Apart from the above the only other known production of the play was at the Rusholme Theatre, Manchester, on 24 November 1924.<sup>(58)</sup> Finally, it remains to point out that the memorial plaque to Houghton (see p.405) carries two sentences from the play:

*The younger generation is bound to win.  
That's how the world goes on.*

The sentences are taken from Martha's speech (Vol.2, pp.240-242), one of the longest ever spoken by one of Houghton's characters.<sup>(59)</sup>

The other pair of plays written by Houghton in which one is a longer version of the other is Fancy Free and Partners. The former was written in March 1911,<sup>(60)</sup> reputedly in a single evening.<sup>(61)</sup>

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55. 28 June 1913, H.C. Vol.L.

56. The Manchester Programme, 1 Dec.1913, p.8.

57. See Ch.13 p.407.

58. Joyce Knowlson, Theatre Collection, Vol.3. op.cit.

59. See p.168 where most of it is quoted.

60. Introduction, p.xlvii.

61. The Referee, 14 Dec.1913, H.C. Vol.L.

Brighthouse states that it held a "curiously important place amongst Houghton's plays,"<sup>(62)</sup> a point which will become progressively clear.

Oddly it was licensed twice by the Lord Chamberlain: once on 6 November 1911 (No.406) and again on 11 June 1912 (No.738).<sup>(63)</sup> If its title did not give an indication of the type of play it was meant to be then its subtitle did: "A fantastic comedy in one-act".<sup>(64)</sup>

The Examiner of Plays' review is interesting:

... 'Fancy' with her lover (Alfred) by her side, is writing to 'Ethelbert' (her husband - whom she believes to be in Scotland) to tell him she has left him for ever. She goes upstairs to finish her letter. Ethelbert enters (he and Alfred are old friends). Alfred reluctantly breaks the news that he has just run away with Fancy. Ethelbert consoles with him - a talk of her extravagance etc. - Ethelbert is not alone: he has with him 'Delia', a lady he met in Edinburgh. The four ... discuss the situation & one another's shortcomings. Finally, Fancy pairs off with her husband & Delia starts to fascinate Alfred. Mildly cynical & immoral, but harmless. Recommended for licence.

The above was written by C.E. Brookfield, and if one recalls that man's reputation (see p.205) then his final comment above bears note, particularly in relation to C.E. Montague's review of the play. This will be seen shortly.

The play was first produced in Manchester at the Gaiety on 6 November 1911 by Iden Payne.<sup>(65)</sup> Towards the end of the first week Montague reviewed it for The Manchester Guardian. His report was trenchant:

62. Introduction, pp.xlvii-viii.

63. L.C.P. Vols. 29 and 30 (respectively for the Gaiety, Manchester and the Adelphi, London). In the event the latter was staged at the Tivoli: see p.217.

64. *ibid.* but omitted from The Works, Vol.3, pp.95-114.

65. The Works, Vol.3, p.309. It featured Payne, Esmé Percy, Mona Limerick (Payne's wife) and Carrie Haase. A. Nicoll (op.cit.) and Dr. Gaberthuel (op.cit.) give its first production as 10 Nov. - a Friday.



*'Fancy Free' ... struck us as a weak piece and a step backwards - no doubt only momentary - for its author. We could find hardly any observation of the living model in it, except perhaps in the case of Delia, whose vulgar advances, in their mechanical repetition, represent a veracious though shallow and commonplace trait of courtesanship .... Alfred and Ethelbert [are] our old friends the comic immortalists of Wilde's plays .... The effect is of a 'studio piece' ... without the brilliant dazzle of wit and impudence that enabled Wilde to carry it through .... Except for a slight touch of jauntiness which pervades the treatment, not very happily, the author gives us a rather cold, dry, impersonal representation of the two men and two women morally not very far removed from a state of canine promiscuity ... (66)*

The play, in fact, failed in Manchester yet several months later in London it helped to consolidate Houghton's reputation. Gerald Cumberland recollects the effect the failure in Manchester had on Houghton. Although unable to name the play, he clearly meant Fancy Free:

*I recollect, however, that three or four men and women met in the corridor of a London hotel and talked or suggested risky things .... and it certainly never occurred to me that it was immoral or nasty; it was merely a dramatic experiment that did not quite come off .... Houghton must have felt the criticism sorely, but when I met him next day he pluckily treated it as a matter of no consequence whatever. "A reasonable man cannot expect always to be understood", said he, "and I suppose 'The Manchester Guardian' which has always been very good to me in the past, has a right to scold me if it thinks fit".*

*"A 'scolding', Houghton: Why, you were thrashed".*

*"Well, I suppose I was. But I can stand it".*

*Vain men are invariably supersensitive and for that reason I think Houghton felt every word and act of hostility; but he never showed weakness under opposition, and he could hit back when he thought it worthwhile. (67)*

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- 66. 11 Nov.1911, in Montague Collection.
  - 67. Set Down in Malice, op.cit. pp.64-65. Further information given by Cumberland helps to identify it: he says it was new and given at the Gaiety and then later at a London music hall. The latter would have been the Tivoli on 17 June 1912.

Now this comment is interesting for two reasons. Allowing for Cumberland's usual cynicism, it probably had some truth in it: one need only recall Houghton's reaction to a similar review as reported in the letter from James Bone to Monkhouse.<sup>(68)</sup> Secondly, Cumberland was right in his assessment of the play as a dramatic experiment, a point keenly advocated by Dixon Scott who saw the play as one of a group of "deft impersonations":<sup>(69)</sup> Houghton was imitating the best contemporary playwrights and blending their individual hallmarks into one. The influence of playwrights like Hankin, Shaw and Wilde certainly helped advance that skill with dialogue that Houghton was fast becoming identified with and which was to reach a peak in Hindle Wakes. As Scott noticed,

*these mimicries were never unconscious .... They were deliberate feats undertaken with the definite purpose of testing his strength by the stiffest contemporary standards and of supplying his native defects. (ibid.)*

Indeed, if one moves ahead for a moment to Partners one finds such evidence, which at times is almost blatant:

Oliver:                   ... most witty things are like peaches.  
If you handle them, you rub off the  
bloom. (Partners, Vol 2, p.13).

compares with,

Lady Bracknell:       ... Ignorance is like a delicate exotic  
fruit; touch it and the bloom is gone.  
(The Importance of being Earnest)<sup>(70)</sup>

and,

Cynthia:               How am I to return to my husband when  
he won't have me?

Oliver:                You ought not to wash dirty linen in  
private. (Partners, p.74)

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68. See Ch. 4, p.125.

69. Men of Letters, op.cit. pp.170-171. The others were Partners and The Fifth Commandment.

70. Oscar Wilde: Plays, Penguin, 1977, p.266.

compares with,

Algernon: ... the amount of women in London who flirt with their own husbands is perfectly scandalous. It looks so bad. It is simply washing one's clean linen in public.

(The Importance of being Earnest, pp.259-260)

In Fancy Free Houghton in fact used W.S. Gilbert's directive for the play Engaged (1877) which read:

*It is absolutely essential to the success of this piece that it should be played with the most perfect earnestness and gravity throughout. There should be no exaggeration ... and the characters ... should appear to believe, throughout, in the perfect sincerity of their words and actions. Directly the actors show that they are conscious of the absurdity of their utterances the piece begins to drag. (71)*

In Fancy Free he shortened it to:

*This play should be acted with the most perfect seriousness and polish. It should not be played in a spirit of burlesque. It should be beautifully acted, beautifully costumed, and beautifully staged. (The Works, Vol.3, p.114)*

and in Partners to:

*The comedy should be played throughout with intense gravity, and a high level of polish should be maintained. The most preposterous things should be acted quite earnestly, as if the performers thoroughly believed in them. (The Works, Vol.2, p.5).*

Thus the following example would achieve a particular effect if played in the above manner:

Alfred: I knew, all the time, that Fancy was in love with another man.

Ethelbert: How?

Alfred: Because I am that other man.

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71. Engaged tells the story of a young man who discovers on his wedding day that he may already be married by Scottish Law and there are complications brought about by people whose incomes depend upon his marital status. It ran for 105 performances from 3 Oct. 1877 (Haymarket). See Leslie Baily, The Gilbert and Sullivan Book, Cassell, 1952, p.108 and its foreword.

Ethelbert:     *You don't say so! Permit me to offer  
you my sincere condolences.*

Alfred:       *Thank you. (They shake hands gravely).*  
(Fancy Free, Vol.3, p.107)

Interestingly Engaged was later imitated by Shaw (Arms and The Man  
(1894)) and Wilde (The Importance of Being Earnest (1895)).<sup>(72)</sup>

Houghton's waiter in Partners is undoubtedly Shavian. In Shaw's  
You Never Can Tell (1897) one finds the following:

*The waiter is a remarkable person in his way. A silky  
old man, white haired and delicate looking, but so  
cheerful and contented that in his encouraging presence  
ambition stands rebuked as vulgarity, and imagination as  
treason .... He has a certain expression peculiar to men  
who are pre-eminent in their callings, and who, whilst  
aware of the vanity of success, are untouched by envy.* (73)

whilst in Getting Married (1908) one finds the waiter Collins as

*an elderly man ... with perfect manners ... reassuring ...  
with a vigilant grey eye, and the power of saying  
anything he likes to you without offence, because his tone  
always implies that he does it with your kind permission.* (74)

Francis, in Partners, is described as "a pleasant, precise old man"  
(p.8) and is every bit Shavian in word and deed:

Sir Isaac:     *Do you mean to say that you have been  
listening to our conversation, Francis?*

Waiter:       *Whilst I am serving tea, sir, it is almost  
impossible to avoid hearing what is said  
on this side of the screen. That is one  
of the disadvantages of hotel life, for the  
conversations of the visitors is usually  
very tedious, I find. But you do not need  
to be alarmed sir. I will undertake that  
whatever you say shall go no further.*

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72. See George Rowell (Ed) Plays by W.S. Gilbert, C U P, 1982, p.13.  
Rowell and K. Mobbs adapted Engaged in 1963 as Engaged or  
Cheviot's Choice: a comic opera in 3 Acts (Chappell).
73. Plays Pleasant, Penguin, 1968, p.237.
74. Constable, 1947, p.258.

Sir Isaac:       *[turning to his wife]: But, really, my dear, you must be more careful in future. It is hardly fair to cause Francis any inconvenience.*

Waiter:           *Not at all, sir; Lady Grundy's conversation often gives me the greatest pleasure, I assure you. Her views on current morality are entirely admirable, if I may say so ... (p.11)*

The subtle humour is also Shaw's:

Waiter:           *... I have been the co-respondent in a divorce case.*

Lady Grundy:   *And what did your wife say when she found that you were co-respondent in a divorce case?*

Waiter:           *She was not in a position to say anything, my lady. She was the respondent in the same case. (p.12)*

One may recall that Houghton had once played the waiter in You Never Can Tell.<sup>(75)</sup>

Houghton's imitations are not, however, indications of a weakness.

On the contrary they would appear to be signs of strength. One cannot help but cite Hankin's contention in this respect. With Oscar Wilde specifically in mind he said that:

*Every artist begins by imitating some one. Even the greatest genius does not spring full-born from the head of Zeus. After a time he 'finds himself' and ceases to be an echo, but in the beginning he models himself on others. (76)*

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75. See p. 20 and Introduction, p. xxiv.

76. J. Drinkwater (Ed) The Dramatic Works of St. John Hankin, Secker, 1912, p.185.

Despite the play's initial failure in Manchester, it proved to be a big success in London and then in the music-hall of all places.

Originally it seemed destined for the Adelphi (see fn.63), the home of musical comedy from 1908-c.1918 (see O.C.T. p.13) but for reasons unknown it opened on Monday 17 June 1912 at the Tivoli Music-Hall.

This was one of the London's most famous buildings in the Strand. It was erected in 1890 and, known as the 'Tiv', it became a very popular resort, being demolished in 1916.<sup>(77)</sup> Within two weeks the play had worked its way to the top of the bill, a pleasant surprise for Houghton who wrote to Basil Dean that "*FANCY FREE has made a little hit at the Tivoli, having displaced Wilkie Bard from the 10 o'clock turn*".<sup>(78)</sup>

By 2 July Houghton was able to tell Monkhouse that the play was,

*still pursuing its demoralising course. Enormous bills outside the Tivoli - headed "The Talk of London" etc. etc. - and reprints of press notices. No more successes at the moment.* (79)

The play's opening night had in fact coincided with the second showing of Hindle Wakes at another London theatre,<sup>(80)</sup> the latter having been seen the afternoon of the previous day: this was its very first evening showing. Houghton's London reputation was almost assured:

*A man who could appeal to audiences so different as those of the Stage Society and the Tivoli ... plainly had powers no longer to be ignored.* (81)

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77. O.C.T. p.948.

78. 26 June 1912, Dean Collection. An advert in the Evening News, 29 July 1912, p.4 shows that it opened at 7.45 pm and presented turns in order of merit to 9 pm. From 9-10 pm it was the supporting act and then the star turn.

79. 2 July 1912, A N M 10.

80. Sponsored by the Incorporated Stage Society but performed by the Gaiety Co. See Ch.8.

81. Introduction, p.xlviii.

Moreover, it was also the beginning of his association with America because on 4 July 1912 the renowned American actor and theatre manager William A. Brady (1863-1950)<sup>(82)</sup> signed two contracts with Houghton's agent, The International Copyright Bureau. One was for Hindle Wakes and the other for Fancy Free. The latter cost Brady £50 (£1,300 in 1981) in advance for the "right of dramatic presentation" in the U.S.A. and Canada "for a period of five years ... at a first class theatre in New York or Chicago". It also permitted performances at "first class vaudeville",<sup>(83)</sup> a point of interest as will be seen. Brady's intentions were often anticipated: "William A. Brady's Plans":  
*"... while in London I secured the American rights of a play by a new author who is creating a stir there. He is Stanley Houghton".*<sup>(84)</sup>

The above view by Brighthouse about the appeal Houghton had created with Fancy Free bears deeper investigation. Why should a play written for the theatre fail in the theatre and yet succeed in <sup>the</sup> music-hall? Houghton himself was to answer that question in an article he submitted to the Evening News (29 July 1912, p.4) entitled 'On Writing for the Music-Halls'. The article was introduced by the editor: "... Fancy Free [is] one of the best sketches seen on the music-halls for some time". Houghton began by asking what basically constituted the difference between the "good music-hall play" and the "good one-act play on the ordinary stage" and concluded that it was a difference "of form", that is though the same idea may be used for both "it must be cast from the beginning in another mould". Central to this was the difference between

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82. O.C.T. p.124.

83. Contract in Stanley Houghton Collection.

84. Republican Springfield, 11 Aug.1912, H.C. Vol.I. Both plays were named.

the audiences, the music-hall audience usually being regarded with "some contempt", a point which Houghton showed to be groundless. At this point, mid-way through a long article, he reached his crucial point:

*'Fancy Free', the little piece of mine now running at the Tivoli, is an admirable example of how not to write for the halls. The reason is simple; it was not written for the halls.*

He even admitted that the opening of the play was boring:

*Each time I have seen this opening I have been profoundly bored by it, in spite of the charming manner in which it is played; and I have always been devoutly grateful to the spectators for listening to it so kindly until a third character comes on and creates some sort of situation. Persons making their way to the bar before this point have had my sincere sympathy.*

His final remark that "if the play from the 'legitimate' stage succeeds, it succeeds in spite of its defects or unsuitability" certainly proved true; it ran for over five weeks.

What Houghton had done, albeit unintentionally, was to work in reverse: the audiences of the music-halls were requiring different entertainment and Houghton had produced it. W. MacQueen-Pope (see fn.33) noted that by the Edwardian period

*the whole of music-hall was growing anaemic, and was already losing its grip upon that full-bodied vulgar humour which has been part of the British national make-up since the days of Chaucer .... In its heyday [it] represented the type of entertainment most loved by the masses ... gay, raffish, carefree. (85)*

After 1912, for example, the London Coliseum "struck an individual note as a refined and respectable music-hall to which one could safely take children".<sup>(86)</sup> George Rowell is of the same opinion:

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85. O.C.T. p.666.

86. ibid.



*This change in the composition of the music-hall audience called for a corresponding change in the bill of fare, amongst which the popularity in the Edwardian era of the sketch and short play was particularly striking. (87)*

Moreover, this neglect of the "sharper, more sophisticated flavour which Victorian burlesque had in part supplied" was now being replaced by "the reappearance [of] ... the modern 'revue'". (ibid). Without going into a detailed study of the revue it is pertinent to notice that whilst no satisfactory English term has ever been found for it, (88) "a few years before the First World War what is now known as revue became very popular", particularly in London. (89) Such revues were mainly satiric, of contemporary events, witty and burlesque - almost the ingredients which make up Fancy Free.

This now leads to a final point of interest. Frank Vernon, in his The Twentieth-Century Theatre (90) argues the merits of the one-act play saying that they only survive now (i.e. in the 1920's) "as the revue sketch". (p.89) He then cites Fancy Free:

*Would it 'fit into' revue? It is a light-as-air trifle of a one-acter but it has a solidity which marks it as a different form from the light-as-air revue sketch. They are sketches; 'Fancy Free' is a one-act play. They vanish, and it remains. (p.89)*

Linked with Houghton's earlier view as expressed in 'Writing for the Music-Hall', this now seems to indicate the reasons for the play's success or at any rate Brighouse's use of the word "curious" in relation to the play. Incidentally, Vernon also saw Fancy Free as

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87. The Victorian Theatre: a survey, O U P, 1956, p.145.

88. O.C.T. p.797

89. ibid.

90. Harrap, 1924.

*one of the lightest, most trivial, of the one-acters of the pre-war years ... because it happens also to be quite as non-moral as any revue sketch ... (ibid).*

Now "non-moral" is interesting when one recollects the Examiner of Plays' (Charles Brookfield) remark that Fancy Free was "mildly cynical & unmoral" because in 1893 at the Court Theatre "the first real revue [was] seen in England"; it was called Under the Clock and was written by Seymour Hicks and one Charles Brookfield.<sup>(91)</sup>

One of the aspects of revue was contemporaneity and Fancy Free was certainly that:

*By the end of Edward's reign many thoughtful people had come to believe that the institutional forms of man-woman relations in England were outmoded and unjust at best and were often immoral and degrading. Attitudes were changing toward marriage and divorce, toward the double standard (which the existing divorce laws made official), and toward irregular sexual behaviour. (92)*

At the turn of the century Lord Russell twice presented a bill to amend and liberalize the laws governing marriage and divorce. Both failed but at least the issue had been put before the public where it remained a "lively public issue for the rest of the Edwardian period". (ibid. p.192). Thus in 1903 'The Society for Promoting Reforms in the Marriage and Divorce Laws of England' was founded and shortly after saw the creation of the 'Divorce Law Reform Association'. By 1906 the two had merged and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle became the President, a post he held for ten years. In 1909 a Royal Commission was appointed to consider reforms in the laws of marriage and divorce: "a remarkable change in English attitudes had occurred in a rather short time". (ibid. p.192). Arnold Bennett in 1906 wrote a novel entitled Whom God

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91. O.C.T. p.797.

92. Samuel Hynes, The Edwardian Turn of Mind, op.cit. p.173.

Hath Joined: it dealt with the suffering and humiliation that the process of English divorce law imposed upon the principals, innocent and guilty alike: everyone was degraded, and no one gained happiness or freedom from the law.<sup>(93)</sup> Similar sentiments were to be found in drama: Galsworthy's Man of Property (1906); St. John Hankin's The Last of the de Mullins (1908); Shaw's Getting Married (1908); and Granville Barker's Madras House (1910). One may also add Houghton's other plays: Partners (1911); Phipps (1912); Trust the People (in part) (1912) and from a somewhat different angle, Hindle Wakes (1911). Indeed, a summary by Hynes applies neatly to Houghton's works:

*The Edwardian plays start with the biological facts of sexual attraction and the urge to reproduce, and work toward solving human relations in those terms; the tone is tolerant and amused, sex is more a physiological and social problem than a moral one, and resolutions are pragmatic and tentative. (p.195)*

Shaw's Preface to Getting Married develops similar points only in greater detail.

Paul Thompson<sup>(94)</sup> offers other relevant facts. Separations were ten times as common as divorce in the 1900's so that the increase in formal marital breakdown was worse than indicated by the divorce figures.

It is little wonder then that A.L. Ellis should see Fancy Free not only as "a miniature gem" combining the "polished artifice of Oscar Wilde" with the "gay, non-moral wit of some audacious 'boulevardier'" but also as a play in which he showed his "frank contempt for current British standards of sexual morality ... with an appearance of levity which shocked the puritan".<sup>(95)</sup>

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93. I am indebted to Samuel Hynes, op.cit. for the reference to Bennett.

94. The Edwardians: the remaking of British Society, op.cit. p.82.

95. The English Review, Jan.1914, pp.275-6.

Success was also achieved in America with performances in 1913 totalling 115.<sup>(96)</sup> From February to June it was the principle item at the Princess Theatre, New York.<sup>(97)</sup> The New York Times saw it as "a delightful bit of satire ... which had the audience in gales of laughter" with the dialogue being "so clever as to be persistently amusing".<sup>(98)</sup> It also played other theatres in 1916 and 1917.<sup>(99)</sup> In England, however, the only other known performance was in 1920 and then it was seen in a special programme of plays to mark the closure of the Gaiety. It ran with The Younger Generation from 6 May.<sup>(100)</sup> It was broadcast by B.B.C. Radio on 12 October 1950 and repeated again six days later.<sup>(101)</sup> French published it separately in 1912 and again in 1913 as part of Five One-Act Plays.<sup>(102)</sup> Interestingly, this latter publication omitted to give the Gaiety as the venue for its first production, concentrating solely on its run at the Tivoli. C.E. Montague, reviewing the edition, noted this: "theatrical analysts should observe that there was an earlier production in Manchester",<sup>(103)</sup> which is interesting if one recalls Montague's original review of the play (p.211) and its subsequent failure in Manchester.

For Houghton, though, the matter did not end there. It encouraged him

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96. James M. Salem, A Guide to Critical Reviews, op.cit. pp.125-6.  
97. Introduction, p.xlviii.  
98. 15 March 1913, p.13.  
99. Constance D'Arcy Mackay, The Little Theatre in the United States, op.cit. p.86.  
100. Manchester Gaiety and Midland Theatre Programmes, Vol.5, op.cit.  
101. Radio Times, Oct.1950.  
102. A. Nicoll, English Drama 1900-1930, op.cit. p.734.  
103. The Manchester Guardian, 6 Feb.1913, in Montague Collection.

to actually write another play but this time with the music-hall very much in mind. In an interview he gave to the Glasgow Evening Times (20 Dec.1912, p.4) he said:

*In England ... there are two classes of halls - the old and the new. In the old, the playlet is invariably a frost; in the new, it is frequently the favourite 'turn'. I saw instances of the differences in the vaudeville audiences when my sketch 'Fancy Free' was recently toured. In one hall it would go down all right, whereas in another the audience sat throughout without a single smile.*

The new play was Pearls and that will be discussed later (see Ch.9, p.326).

In conclusion it may be as well to qualify Brighouse's view that Fancy Free

*is perhaps best [regarded] ... as the brilliant indiscretion of a man not yet old enough to have outgrown a wish sometimes to 'epater le bourgeois' (104)*

with a comment made by The Manchester Guardian in its obituary notice of Houghton. It, succinctly, saw the play as "*an adroit triviality*".<sup>(105)</sup>

Partners was the full length version of Fancy Free, extended to three acts and written between May and September 1911.<sup>(106)</sup> It was never acted in Houghton's life-time but early in 1915 Milton Rosmer produced and starred in it at Manchester. Rosmer, an original Horniman actor, had previously appeared in the first productions of The Master of the House and The Younger Generation.<sup>(107)</sup>

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104. Introduction, p.xlviii.

105. 11 Dec.1913, p.16.

106. Introduction, p.xlviii.

107. The Works, Vol.3, p.308. It will be recalled that Houghton did not like the way Rosmer acted in The Master of the House (see p.178).

He later appeared in the first production of The Hillarys and took it on tour (see Ch.6). Rosmer, incidentally, was ex The Manchester Grammar School. He was born Arthur Milton Lunt (1882-1971). He eventually succeeded Iden Payne as Director of the Stratford Memorial Theatre in 1943.<sup>(108)</sup>

Much of what has been said about Fancy Free applies to Partners. The play carries an interesting motto, indicating, perhaps, its theme: *"They say. What say they? Let them say"*. (The Works, Vol 2, p.2). This defiant motto, reputedly found engraved in Greek on remains from classical antiquity, was adopted in 1593 by George Keith, 5th Earl of Marischal (1553-1623), as the motto of the Earls of Marischal of Scotland. It is inscribed at Marishal College as: *"They half said: Quhat say they? Let theme say"*.<sup>(109)</sup> The typescript was submitted to the Lord Chamberlain for licence, which it received on 10 April 1915,<sup>(110)</sup> for production at the Prince's Theatre, Manchester on 19 April 1915 for the first time<sup>(111)</sup> with Rosmer playing Oliver, and the sister of James Agate, May, playing Cynthia.

The Examiner of Plays' review is illuminating and also shows how Houghton had lengthened the play:

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108. Who Was Who in the Theatre 1912-76, op.cit. Vol.4, p.2073.

109. The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, O U P, 1981, (2<sup>nd</sup> Edtn), p.14.

110. L.C.P. Vol.7, No.3287. The motto appears directly under Houghton's name.

111. A programme in Brighthouse Collection.

*This is a fair attempt to write a play in the more farcical manner of Oscar Wilde. The atmosphere is topsy-turvy and the dialogue paradoxical. Sometimes, indeed, the paradoxes read like a burlesque of Wilde's efforts. Sometimes, also, there is an inverted morality - so far as the dialogue goes, for nothing whatever happens - which in other days would have been thought daring, but is easily surpassed in Wilde's and other plays, and there is never the faintest suggestion that any of the absurd views and theories should be taken seriously. The plot is of the slightest, of course. A and B are a young couple, C and D another. A and B take a holiday apart once a year, C and D are separated for purely theoretical difference. C nearly persuades B to elope with him, but her husband turns up and she promptly finds she loves him best. But A is really there to elope with D: he too finds he loves his wife best. Lady Grundy, however, tells him of B's flirtation with C, whereupon A and B have a row and say they will stick to their original idea of elopement. But meanwhile C and D have met and find that they too love one another best. Finally there is a scrimmage between A and C and then the wives really go to their respective husbands and they all go into dinner together. That is all: the rest is preposterous arguments between the young people. It is all rather witty and light-hearted and I do not think even the dullest moralist could suggest that the sanctity of the marriage tie was endangered. I fear, however, that the vogue of this sort of topsy-turvydom is over.*

*Recommended for licence. G.S. Street.*

Just why the play was 'forgotten' is not clear since Houghton had finished writing it before the mixed reception given to Fancy Free. It may well be that the friend to whom Houghton had sent the play "immediately on completion"<sup>(112)</sup> was in fact Rosmer who then may have kept it until 1915. Houghton meanwhile was busy writing Hindle Wakes, even before completing Partners.<sup>(113)</sup>

The Rosmer production was warmly received but immediately compared with Hindle Wakes. One headline read, "Promise of 'Hindle Wakes' not realised"

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112. Introduction, p.xlix.

113. *ibid*.

and continued, "although this new comedy ... possesses here and there some amusing and confusing situations".<sup>(114)</sup> Allan Monkhouse, for The Manchester Guardian conceded that it was "pure artifice" and a "drawing-room game" with Houghton's stage directions<sup>(115)</sup> merely preventing "the complete disintegrations of flippancy".<sup>(116)</sup> Moreover, he also pointed out the similarities with Shaw's How he Lied to her husband (1904), particularly the waiter. The play has never been published (other than in The Works) and no other performance has been listed save one, which is interesting.

On 14 June 1978 the Octagon Theatre, Bolton, issued a press release in which it stated that

*the WORLD PREMIERE [sic] of Stanley Houghton's comedy 'PARTNERS' would be performed from 27 June to 22 July 1978.*

Moreover,

*although written in 1911 [it] has no previously recorded performances.* <sup>(117)</sup>

Indeed, the theatre typed the play out from The Works (copyright having expired) and submitted it to the Lord Chamberlain for licence, which it duly received.<sup>(118)</sup> The Manager was still unaware of the original

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114. Daily Chronicle, 20 April 1915, H.C. Vol.N.

115. He must mean those in The Works, Vol.2, p.5 which may well have appeared in the programme. These have been discussed earlier: see p.214.

116. 20 April 1915, p.9.

117. Press Release from the theatre's Press Officer, ref.TSW/16.

118. No.720. Filed in British Museum MSS.Dept. (Playscripts). The play did not require a licence because it already had one (see p.225). The reason a typed copy was sent is curious. The Manager of the theatre informed me by telephone that the Lord Chamberlain's Office had written saying they required all new plays (including first performances) to be registered. Prior to Partners the L.C.'s Office had, in 1972, required a similar copy for the 'new' play which they were then doing - Hindle Wakes.



production until my involvement with the theatre for a display on Hindle Wakes in 1982. They had in fact chosen Partners to mark the 70th Anniversary of the founding of the Repertory Movement by Miss Horniman. Many papers reviewed it favourably.<sup>(119)</sup> The Daily Express (1 July 1978) began by quoting some of its epigrams: "*What a pity you cannot have two husbands - one for the day and one for the night*"; "*morality is no barrier to one's impulses*"; "*Every wife ought to have a holiday from her husband ... the tragedy is that those who get it seldom want it, and those who want it seldom get it*". It then added a remark which may well serve to illustrate the contemporary reaction experienced by Houghton: it noted that when these epigrams were written

*Mrs. Whitehouse was a babe in arms,<sup>(120)</sup> ladies wore gloves, and the height of impropriety was to flash a trim ankle.*

The reviewer was also incredulous at "*the neglect [which] ... is astonishing and ill-deserved*". The Guardian (28 June), surprisingly, also reported it as a first production. It saw Partners as a

*carefully crafted comedy of marriage, morals and manners, a pre-emptive 'Private Lives', primordial Ayckbourn.*

The Daily Telegraph (28 June) regarded it as "*completely artificial comedy ... [but] marvellously well-turned and crammed with lines to make us think of Oscar Wilde*". Also, "*the idea itself is theatrically familiar. Noel Coward or Alan Ayckbourn or a dozen other writers of light marital comedy have dabbled with it since*". Moreover,

*Houghton's dabbings are so beautifully constructed and so cynically phrased in both word and deed ... that the gentlemanly style of the irony sometimes seems to be even above Wilde's level. Something warmer, though not less witty, gives the elegant literate nonsense a touch of wisdom as well as humanity.*

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119. I am grateful to the theatre for copies of these reviews.

120. d.o.b. 13 June 1910.

Finally, The Times (29 June) regarded it as *"artificial"* yet having *"a liberal joy in its theme that makes for much pleasure"*. It concluded that on balance the production sensibly presented Houghton's comedy for its *"previously unknown literary merit"*.

Even before completing Partners Houghton's mind was 'incubating' yet another play - his twentieth. His dramatic skills, as seen, had begun to produce works of a relatively high standard. It was perhaps inevitable then that his next play would, as a result of experience, be polished. What did emerge was in fact never to be bettered: Hindle Wakes became one of the most written about plays of the period. Its full history has not previously been recorded and as such it will require a lengthy chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHT

HINDLE WAKES

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Hindle Wakes was the play which finally established Houghton's reputation as a playwright, convinced him to abandon completely his full time occupation and move to London.<sup>(1)</sup> There his reputation allowed him to become one of Society's elite, with membership of top clubs and the acquaintance of other renowned people. The play's history is long and very interesting, its influence stretching far beyond Houghton into dramatic and cinematic history. It has been played in various parts of the world and is today probably the only known play by the author, and then generally remembered only by its title with no knowledge of the writer. It filled literally hundreds of newspaper columns around the world and was seen by such notable people as members of The Royal Family and well-established society figures. As such, and in order to avoid confusion, it will be convenient to sub-divide the chapter into sections, each with a general sub-heading.

1. The play's title

Of all Houghton's plays, this one's genesis is easiest to establish. Its title was decided upon immediately: "*Hindle Wakes*" was, from the first line in the penny notebook, '*Hindle Wakes*'.<sup>(2)</sup> For Houghton it was a title easily understood but for others it was very confusing since many were unsure whether 'Wakes' was a noun or a verb. It caused no end of confusion. The phrase seems to have existed long before Houghton took it as title: it was a dish dating from medieval times. It has been suggested it was a corruption of the recipe 'Hen

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1. Introduction, p.xvii.

2. *ibid.* p.xlix. Houghton planned his plays in detail prior to writing, generally in small notebooks (which no longer exist). See p.33 of this thesis for details.

de la Wake' in which chicken was prepared and eaten during the annual fair or Wakes. Today it is believed to be a traditional dish of the woollen mill towns of Lancashire served up during festivals and celebrations. (3)

The theories put forward once the play was seen were curious. For example:

*I am credibly informed that the word "Wakes" in the title means a sort of beano, (4)*

and,

*I had no theory as to what the title might mean, and had with some pains constructed one to fit the circumstances of this young woman of the cotton industry of Hindle awakening to the new independence of her sex. (5)*

Similar confusion accompanied its American release, as will be seen.

Indeed, when Brighouse turned the play into a novel in 1927 (see p.261)

the Editor felt obliged to add a note explaining the title:

*'Hindle Wakes' derives its title from a very ancient Anglo-Saxon custom, essentially religious in its origin. The 'Wake' of old time was an annual celebration to commemorate the completion or consecration of a parish church. Tents and booths were set up in the churchyard, after which an all-night service of prayer and meditation was followed by a general holiday devoted to feasting, dancing and sports. As time went on, 'Wakes', however, degenerated into fairs, and even so early as Edgar's reign 958-975, records speak of their revelry and drunkenness as having become a scandal. Henry VI in 1445, made some attempt to restrict their*

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3. It was reputedly rediscovered near Wigan in 1900. Another theory holds that it was brought by Flemish spinners who settled near Bolton. See Elisabeth Ayrton, The Cookery of England, Deutsch, 1974, p.169 and Dorothy Hartley, Food in England, Macdonald and Jane's, 1954, pp.189-190 and Woman's Realm, Vol.xxxviii, No.1, 221, 20 Feb.1982, p.31.
  4. Punch, 24 July 1912, H.C. Vol.I.
  5. Outlook, 22 June 1912, *ibid*.

*license by suppressing them on Sundays and holy days, but the Stuarts viewed them with more latitude. Nowadays, the name for these festivals survives chiefly in Lancashire. (6)*

Prior to this, however, Houghton decided to settle the matter by writing a long explanation of the term. It appeared in the Evening News (9 Aug.1912, p.4). It began:

*To Lancashire people it is astounding that anybody should be unfamiliar with the term 'Wakes'.*

He then added quite categorically that

*Wakes in Lancashire are simply the annual holidays observed by certain towns. There is no regular date common to the county as a whole, though of course the summer months are always the chosen ones .... The period lasts a week or ten days, and during that time each town not only suspends all commercial activity, but ~~is~~ actually almost deserted.*

## 2. The play : factual background

In the above article Houghton moved on to give some essential background which has a particularly strong bearing on the play. One point (of which more will be said later) is in fact only credible with this knowledge. Indeed, its utterance on stage has been viewed humorously and as an exaggeration by Houghton simply because of the lack of knowledge on the part of the listener. In the closing moments Fanny says:

*I'm a Lancashire lass, and so long as there's weaving sheds in Lancashire I shall earn enough brass to keep me going. I wouldn't live at home again after this .... I'm going to be on my own in future. (7)*

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6. Harold Brighouse, Hindle Wakes, The Readers' Library Publishing Co. 1927, p.8.
  7. The Works, Vol2, p.179.

Financial independence for a mill worker, and a woman at that, was generally underestimated, but Houghton knew full well that "*the woman [was] a skilled and well-paid worker in a cotton mill*".<sup>(8)</sup> In 1896, for example, textile workers in Lancashire and Cheshire totalled some 470,000 of which 289,000 were women who were "*comparatively well paid and therefore more independently-minded than most female industrial employees*".<sup>(9)</sup> To one critic Houghton was obliged to tell that "*A Lancashire weaver is independent economically; earns really good wages, in fact*".<sup>(10)</sup> Such facts were recorded:

*As a class the cotton operatives of Lancashire are the most highly skilled, and enjoy the highest standard of living of any section of the industry throughout the world.*<sup>(11)</sup>

The 1909 Board of Trade Report showed that in 1906, for example, the average wage for women in the Textile Trade was 18/8 (men 26/9), giving a total wages bill for one week of £512,000 (£15,360,000 in 1981).<sup>(12)</sup> When these facts are put into the context proffered by Batho and Dobrée, that between 1900 and 1914 the average worker found himself not better but worse off, and yet during the same period this country "*showed an ostentation of wealth and vulgarity unknown since the days of James I*",<sup>(13)</sup> the cotton worker seems to have been relatively secure.

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8. Evening News, op.cit.
  9. D. Mitchell, Queen Christabel: a biography of Christabel Pankhurst, Macdonald and Jane's, 1977, p.42.
  10. Critic unknown. The letter from which it is taken was printed in an unidentified newspaper dated 15 Dec. 1913. The clipping is one of twenty in the Harvard Theatre Collection, U.S.A., under 'Stanley Houghton'.
  11. The Encyclopaedia Britannica, 12<sup>th</sup> Edition, London, 1922, p.768.
  12. *ibid.*
  13. The Victorians and After, The Cresset Press, 1962, (3<sup>rd</sup> edn.) pp.128-9.

Houghton in his article above moved on to other important facts which were to influence the play:

*All the year the man or woman ... pay so much a week into a 'Going-away Club'. By the time Wakes week comes round each person has a considerable sum saved up, and the total amount drawn out by the combined workers at the same time is quite enormous. In Heywood [near Rochdale] for instance, a comparatively small town, over £15,000 [£390,000 in 1981] will be drawn out of the clubs this week and distributed amongst the merry-makers. It is not a holiday; it is a migration.*

He then went on to give other figures based on a report from a Blackburn paper (unidentified): *"The complete figures for Blackburn come to over £30,000 [£780,000 in 1981]".* He explained that the money was solely for the purpose of a good holiday, to be spent up on the lodging-house keepers, the public houses, the variety entertainments, the dancing halls and *"the towers, palaces and empires of the great Northern watering places"*, and most significantly

*upon Blackpool, Douglas and Morecambe, but above all, upon Blackpool. The man who has not seen Blackpool promenade on a hot August Bank Holiday has something left to live for. Two solid miles of humanity, slowly circulating, perspiring ...*

He then finally answered the question as to why such hard earned income should be squandered:

*I suppose that is part of the pleasure. It must be enormously attractive suddenly to live at the rate of a thousand a year [£26,000 in 1981] after fifty weeks at a couple of pounds a week.*

Moreover,

*they can spend it, these pale-faced weaver lassies .... They know how to enjoy themselves better than anyone in Great Britain. The money is there and it has got to be spent .... The festivity endures as long as the money lasts, and often things are cut very fine towards the end. It is rather a point of honour to be 'spent up' as they call it, on the last day .... Before you went away you will have carefully placed a few shillings on the mantelpiece underneath the clock. That has got to last you until next payday.*



Houghton's singling out of Blackpool was also important: it was to be central to the plot of Hindle Wakes. The contemporary view held of its holiday atmosphere was to enable Houghton to allow, with apparent ease, not only the mixing of the classes as represented by Alan, Fanny, George and Mary, but also the manner. Between 1870-1914 Blackpool's holiday industry expanded rapidly mainly because of the Lancashire and Yorkshire textile towns:

*Blackpool dominated the expanding holiday traffic of the area between Preston, Colne and the south side of Manchester, especially during Wakes Weeks. (14)*

In fact, during a good year up to three-quarters of the whole population in several towns would seem to have gone to Blackpool during the Wakes at about this time (ibid. p.37). Moreover,

*the seaside holiday became an accepted feature of the communal calendar in the textile towns, to be eagerly anticipated and to form the focus of good and shared recollections for months afterwards. (15)*

More importantly, however, was the manner of the holiday:

*The communal nature of the cotton holidays was conducive to good behaviour among visitors who were often self-regulating. For its Wakes visitors Blackpool had none of the anonymity of a cosmopolitan or metropolitan resort. Dissolute or reprehensible behaviour was likely to come to the notice of relatives, friends and workmates ... the discipline of the respectable working-class family was often strictly imposed in the lodging-house. (16)*

This explains why Fanny's strict parents allowed her to go away in the first place. However, it could have also caused Houghton a problem: how, in this setting, could Alan seduce Fanny? The answer was to get

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14. The Blackpool Landlady: a social history, Manchester U P, 1978, p.37. This book also notes that such holidays were achieved by (a) the relatively high family income made possible by female wages, especially the spinners ("a labour aristocracy"); (b) savings clubs: see pp.31-35.
15. ibid. p.38.
16. ibid. pp.39-40.

them both out of Blackpool and to Llandudno, a resort which in Victorian times had had its reputation sullied<sup>(17)</sup> but which by Edwardian times was regarded (in literature at least) as "*being more stylish than ... Blackpool*"<sup>(18)</sup> which of course would have been well in keeping with Alan's social standing. Indeed, Edwardian literature seems to have capitalised more and more on the seaside resort as a setting,<sup>(19)</sup> with Hindle Wakes in particular being regarded not only as typical but accurate:

*the fictional seaside was no more daring or unusual than the summer reality.* <sup>(20)</sup>

Fanny may well have been a 'new' type of woman but she was not so in isolation; she was more typical than imagined. Such a view surely accounts for a dialogue like the following:

Alan: But you didn't ever really love me?

Fanny: Love you? Good heavens, of course not! Why on earth should I love you? You were just some one to have a bit of fun with. You were an amusement - a lark. .... I'm a woman, and you were my little fancy. You wouldn't prevent a woman enjoying herself as well as man, if she takes it into her head?

Alan: But do you mean to say that you didn't care any more for me than a fellow cares for any girl he happens to pick up?

Fanny: Yes. Are you shocked? .... We've had a right good time together. I'll never forget that. It has been a right good time, and no mistake! We've enjoyed ourselves proper! But all good times have to come to an end, and ours is over now. [The Works, Vol.2, pp.175-6].

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17. The Blackpool Landlady: a social history, op.cit. p.40.
  18. Arnold Bennett's The Card (1911) quoted in James Walvin, Beside the Seaside: a social history of the popular seaside holiday, Allen Lane, 1978, p.91.
  19. *ibid.*
  20. *ibid.*

Houghton was not only drawing on a literary convention but worked by overturning it. What Alan said should have been said by Fanny and vice-versa: Houghton had reversed the sex roles. It was no wonder that in an interview he was able to state quite categorically that the play was "*not offered as a commentary on life*" but as "*a transcript from it*".<sup>(21)</sup> His exploitation of the convention had enabled that type of portrayal Houghton had set out many plays earlier to write: a new look at the everyday (see p.80).

What he now needed was an incident and some characters in which to feed this realistic possibility. I have already referred in detail to the Royal Exchange (p.8 ) and it was there that he found one of his principal characters who was "*modelled on a man I met on the Royal Exchange*".<sup>(22)</sup> More importantly, however, he had "*heard of a case somewhat similar to that which I used as the main incident of the play*".<sup>(23)</sup> Here then were the ingredients: a credible background; a plot based on reality; a major character also from life, and other plays already in existence with similarities. Houghton combined the lot and came up with an original whole. It was no wonder then that Hindle Wakes was able to be "*sketched on a few scattered papers of a penny notebook*",<sup>(24)</sup> and why its completion only took three months: October, November and December of 1911<sup>(25)</sup> and then only in his spare time since he still worked a full day at Battersby's and wrote many reviews and articles for The Manchester Guardian (see Appendices).

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21. Daily Dispatch, 24 Aug. 1912, p.4.

22. Daily Dispatch, *ibid.*

23. Interview given to the Glasgow Evening Times, 20 Dec.1912, p.4.

24. Introduction, p.xxxix.

25. Introduction, p.xlix.

Finally, the very first mention of the play in its genesis was ironic. Houghton had written a long letter to Monkhouse in mid October 1911, praising the latter's play Mary Broome (of which more will be said later). After signing off he added a postscript. Apart from the content, it is interesting to note that the body of the letter was typed on three sheets of quality paper whilst the postscript was on a small piece of rougher paper - a true afterthought. It read:

*P.S. I had almost forgotten to tell you that I have been for some time working upon a play called HINDLE WAKES about Lancashire people, in which the millowner's son seduces the daughter of one of his employees, and the millowner insists on the young couple marrying. The theme you see is almost identical, only your treatment [in Mary Broome] is comedy and mine is an attempt at simple realistic drama. These cases of thought transference are very curious. There was Darwin and Wallace, wasn't there? (26)*

The phrase "*simple realistic drama*" is important and was discussed by Houghton in the letter. By it he meant a play lacking in that type of humour which enables a point of view to be put across, "*a criticism*". Simple drama does not offer a criticism: it merely reports. It is significant therefore, and in keeping with all the points made earlier, that the word 'comedy' was not used as a sub-heading for Hindle Wakes: it is simply "*a play in three acts*". (The Works, Vol.2, p.83).

### 3. The play: early attempts to stage

According to Brighouse the play, on completion, was immediately offered to Miss Horniman and accepted for production.<sup>(27)</sup> However, this was not as straightforward as might be supposed. If one recalls Gerald

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26. Houghton to Monkhouse, 15 Oct.1911, A N M 12. Reference has already been made to the implications behind the last sentence (see p.141 ).

27. Introduction, p.xlix.

Cumberland's acid comment that Houghton

*when a play was completed his interest in it immediately intensified. He sent his plays everywhere .... As soon as a play came back, "returned with thanks", out it went again by the next post. And he pulled strings - oh! ever so gently, but he pulled them, (28)*

then it is not surprising to find that he did this with Hindle Wakes.

Brighouse in his autobiography published part of a letter from

Houghton to Anthony Ellis (Houghton's London agent) which was dated

27 December 1911:

*I have just finished a three-act play, rather serious and of more ambitious quality than some of my recent efforts, called 'Hindle Wakes'. It is about Lancashire people and is practically in dialect, though not barbaric. It will be of no use to you for London, but I suppose you would like me to send you a copy to read. Tell me if you don't want one and I will not trouble. It is of no use to anybody but the Gaiety here. (29)*

Now Brighouse quite rightly noted that the letter's diffidence was almost a ruse to get Ellis interested. It would appear that Ellis declined, however, if he be the same person referred to by Brighouse in his Introduction (p.xlix), "*who declined on the grounds ... that he could not hope to cast it properly in London*". (30)

Another offer was made to the Liverpool Repertory Theatre, and a significant one at that. It involved Basil Dean who had once been a

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28. Set Down in Malice, op.cit. p.58.

29. What I have had, op.cit. p.178.

30. Ellis was at one time joint manager of the Criterion Theatre, London. See Who Was Who in the Theatre 1912-76, Vol.2. op.cit. pp.753-4. The Times, 12 Dec.1913, p.8. also records the fact that Ellis received this play.

member of the Horniman Company and had acted in Houghton plays and was a Swan Club Member (see p.94 ). In 1911 he had been appointed the theatre's first director.<sup>(31)</sup> He intended to do for Liverpool what Miss Horniman had done for Manchester in terms of repertory - a venture warmly applauded by Lewis Casson.<sup>(32)</sup> Dean recalled vividly the time when

*Stanley, a close friend of Manchester days, sent me the play before anyone else. I regarded it as his major achievement and said so.<sup>(33)</sup> But we had no actors capable of presenting his closely observed Lancashire characters, whereas Miss Horniman's Company was totally suited to do so.<sup>(34)</sup>*

Even the Liverpool Post, announcing the forthcoming Autumn season, listed the play among others from which a selection was to be made.<sup>(35)</sup> Dean's refusal to accept it cost him dearly: the Chairman of the theatre "*bitterly resented my failure to secure Stanley Houghton's 'Hindle Wakes' for the theatre*". (op.cit. p.102). Shortly afterwards Dean was sacked.

That story did not end there. It would appear that perhaps Dean was not entirely to blame; the play may have been just an excuse to get rid of him. The poet Lascelles Abercrombie (1881-1938) who had been appointed play reader at the theatre "*at the munificent salary of a guinea a week*",<sup>(36)</sup> confided in Monkhouse that the Committee had little

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31. O.C.T. p.235. He also built Ealing Studios in 1931 (see Radio Times, 28 Nov.1981, p.15) and was awarded the C.B.E. and M.B.E. for his services to ENSA.
  32. Letter from Casson to Dean, 15 Feb.1911, in Dean Collection.
  33. Presumably to his Theatre Committee,
  34. Basil Dean, Seven Ages: an autobiography 1888-1927, Hutchinson 1970, pp.101-2.
  35. H.C. Vol.I, dated 6 June 1912.
  36. Seven Ages: an autobiography, op.cit. p.96.

faith in Dean "*whose artistic notions seemed to the board doubtful*", and who therefore wanted Abercrombie, "*(between ourselves) to act as a watch-dog on B. Dean*".<sup>(37)</sup> Several months later (and still well before the first production of Hindle Wakes) Abercrombie was to tell Monkhouse that

*so far there is very little room for soul in the Liverpool R[epertory] T[heatre]. Their anxiety [the Board's] at present is to make money, and yet avoid sheer slosh .... I very much wish I had something more than a mere advisory position .... Houghton's play, for instance; I think it admirable, but I'm doubtful whether I shall get it through. For the coming autumn, the plays still to be selected will have to be, broadly, comedy of nice tone ... [since] the Liverpool niceness ... is several layers nicer, so experts tell me, than Manchester niceness.*<sup>(38)</sup>

He then, in another letter, went on to qualify "*niceness*", and at the same time seems to have vindicated Dean:

*the Board of Directors are developing such a rhinocerotic nose for the nice, or rather un-nice, in drama.*<sup>(39)</sup>

The relevance of all this is two-fold: it gives a fuller picture than that given by Brighouse in the Introduction (p.xlix) or indeed Oliver Elton in his obituary article on Abercrombie,<sup>(40)</sup> and it also hints at the possible reception the play was going to have.

By June 1912 Miss Horniman's Company was engaged in its third tour in London at the Coronet Theatre, a venture first begun in June 1909.

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37. 19 Aug.1911, A N M 1.

38. 7 March 1912, *ibid.*

39. 7 June 1912, *ibid.*

40. Proceedings of The British Academy Memoirs, Vol.25, O U P, 1939, pp.394-421. Abercrombie, like Houghton, was born at Ashton-on-Mersey in 1881. He was also a Swan Club Member (see p.95 ).

Houghton's The Dear Departed, as mentioned earlier, (p.74 ), had been a success there in 1909, as was The Younger Generation in May/June 1912 (see p.161 ). At that latter session she was approached by The Incorporated Stage Society (generally known as the Stage Society) and asked to provide for its thirteenth season a play, new and preferably about Lancashire. Brighthouse says that Hindle Wakes was "*the obvious choice*". (Introduction, p.1) Certainly Miss Horniman had no reason to doubt Houghton after all the success he had previously achieved. He received £100 (£2,600 in 1981) for it.<sup>(41)</sup>

#### 4. The Incorporated Stage Society and the play's licence

It is my belief that the choice of Hindle Wakes was not as serendipitous as Brighthouse made out. The Stage Society was an august institution and a brief study of it is relevant. In an unpublished Ph.D. thesis, W.H. Phillips<sup>(42)</sup> argues that one of the major themes of the institution was 'duty', "*a recurrent word that usually means conventional behaviour as dictated by the old, the parental and the conservative*" (p.18).

This is also a major theme of Hindle Wakes. Many of the plays sponsored by the Society showed "*various rebels against duty and convention*", and more importantly, "*the rebellious female is prominent*". (p.21). He then gives such notable examples of previous productions as Ibsen's Pillars of Society (staged 12 May 1901); Shaw's Mrs. Warren's Profession (5 January 1902); Granville-Barker's The Marrying of Ann Leete

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41. Pogson, p.128. However, reminiscing in an interview with the Manchester Evening News 30 Nov.1920, H.C. Vol.Q. she said that they "*paid me £100*".

42. 'St. John Hankin and the drama of the Stage Society and the Court Theatre' Indiana University, 1972.



(26 January 1902). The woman was paramount, being presented, in general, as *"more complex than nineteenth century drama had usually implied"*. Perhaps more significant was the repetition in productions of the belief in the equality of the sexes and the injustices of the double standard, a point particularly highlighted by Shaw's The Philanderer (written in 1893 but not acted until 1907), with Grace Tranfield who, like Fanny, stated that *"a woman belongs to herself and to nobody else"*.<sup>(43)</sup> The greatest precedent for Hindle Wakes, though, was Hankin's The Last of the De Mullins, first performed by the Stage Society 6 December 1908, in which Janet De Mullins returns home some years after the birth of her illegitimate son and is proffered marriage by the father but rejects it because she does not believe in it out of duty, nor could she marry such an uninteresting man anyway. Other than the maternity issue, this compares almost directly with Fanny and Alan. Consider Janet's remark that:

*I ... can order my life as I please. Is a woman never to be considered old enough to manage her own affairs? ... Is she always to be obeying a father when she's not obeying a husband? Well, I for one will not submit to such nonsense. I'm sick of this everlasting obedience.*<sup>(44)</sup>

Janet, like other heroines, was offered reparation via marriage but rejected it in order to maintain her own individuality. This compares with Fanny who says,

*.... It isn't because I'm afraid of spoiling your life that I'm refusing you, but because I'm afraid of spoiling mine! ... You don't find me making a mess of my life like that.* (The Works, Vol.2, pp.172-3)

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43. Plays Unpleasant, Constable, 1947, p.103.

44. The Dramatic Works of St. John Hankin, Secker, 1912, p.158.

The hallmark of the Society was artistic merit: the presentation of

*English and Continental playwrights that were controversial and had not achieved a commercial production ... [the] vanguard for new drama.* (45)

By 1908 the Society had, for example, produced thirty English plays and twenty-two Continental out of a total of ninety-four submitted. (46)

Lewis Casson, in a lecture to the American Drama Society of Boston, in 1911, added some other useful points of information: its membership was about seventeen hundred, with each play being produced on a Sunday evening and repeated on Monday afternoon. The total cost of each production averaged under one thousand dollars, with the actors receiving a nominal fee of twenty dollars for "three weeks' rehearsals ... and a chance of appearing in a play in which they can take an intelligent interest". (47)

As the Society was established on the basis of subscriptions the performances were technically private and therefore excused censorship. Many notable playwrights were members, including J.M. Barrie, A.E. Drinkwater and G.B. Shaw. Granville-Barker, in fact, emerged from it to join the Court Theatre. (48) It was this institution then that was to sponsor Hindle Wakes, an institution whose role in English theatre was basically two-fold: the contribution of new actors and producers, and the introduction and support of new writers.

Houghton, therefore, would seem to have been a suitable choice. The fact that The Sunday Times (49) was able to announce as early as 2 June 1912 that the Society would perform the play surely signifies more advanced planning than Brighouse seemed to suggest. In fact rehearsals

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45. Elizabeth Sprigge, Sybil Thorndike Casson, Gollancz, 1971, pp.97-8.

46. Figures from The Westminster Gazette, 2 Jan.1908, H.C. Vol.A.

47. Article dated 19 Feb.1911 in H.C. Vol.G.

48. T.H. Dickinson, The Contemporary Drama of England, Murray, 1920, p.159.

49. H.C. Vol.I.

had begun as early as April 1912. Moreover,

*at the same time he [Lewis Casson] started rehearsing a new play which the company would do for the Stage Society before it was incorporated into Miss Horniman's season. This was 'Hindle Wakes' possibly the most famous new play the Gaiety ever did. At the end of April Lewis drove down to London ... with Sybil, for 'Hindle Wakes' was to mark her return to the stage [after the birth of her child] and it had to be rehearsed in London while the other plays were in repertory. (50)*

On 4 June 1912 the play was submitted to the Lord Chamberlain for licence with the venue given as the Aldwych Theatre, London: it was granted the day after receipt.<sup>(51)</sup> Before proceeding it would be as well to clarify a few points. First of all the date given on the application for licence is Friday 14 June, an odd date since it was well-known that the Stage Society only operated on Sunday evenings and Monday afternoons (see p.245). Secondly, the Stage Society production would not require a licence anyway (see p.245). It would seem that Miss Horniman (as indicated by Dr. Devlin above) fully intended to incorporate the play into her repertory and therefore would require a licence: the formalities may well have been completed at that time as a convenience. After all, a date for production was not necessarily adhered to. This is made all the more plausible when one realises that the Stage Society performance was to be acted by the Gaiety Company itself and not, as was customary, by those actors who assembled only for the occasion. Also as Miss Horniman's present season in London was coming to an end she may have considered staging the play there prior

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50. Dr. Diana Devlin, A Speaking Part: Lewis Casson and the theatre of his time, Hodder and Stoughton, 1982, p.75. This book is largely based on her Ph.D. thesis: see p.241, fn.59, *infra*.

51. L.C.P. Vol.28, No.703.

to its opening in Manchester later in the year (see p.286). One last point may also have encouraged this trial run. In May 1912, Miss Horniman had been accused by the Vice-Chancellor of Leeds University of producing "*gloomy plays*", in Manchester, in an article in the Yorkshire Post. She replied that

*If you want wit and humour, you have to go to an Irishman, like Shaw, or to a Scotsman like Barrie. I hope we shall find that Stanley Horton [sic] will prove that an Englishman can write a good play, and one which the public will appreciate.* (52)

Contrary to some reports the play was not censored in any way. Thus Dr. Devlin's point that Charles Brookfield "*may well have regretted giving a licence to 'Hindle Wakes'*" (A Speaking Part, p.78) is not only wrong since Brookfield did not examine the play anyway, but it also negates her other point that "*it is very likely that if it had been submitted as a commercial London play in the first instance, he would have refused it*" (ibid.) since, as I have argued, it was submitted as a commercial proposition. Fortunately, the Examiner of Plays' review is to hand:

*Domestic drama of life in Lancashire. The son of a mill-owner runs away for the week-end at Llandudno with the daughter of one of the weavers. The rather sordid intrigue is discovered by the parents of the young people and the question is whether the seducer shall be compelled to marry his victim. He is weak rather than actually vicious, and he consents to give up the heiress to whom he is engaged and "make an honest woman" of the mill-hand. His difficulty is solved by the girl's sturdy refusal to marry her poor spirited lover. Subject painfully realistic; but treatment discreetly reticent.*

*Recommended for licence. Ernest A. Bendall.* (53)

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52. 23 May 1912, H.C. Vol.I.

53. Bendall was regarded as "*The doyen of London critics, a bland, unshowy but sober judge of drama [who] had worked as a civil servant for thirty years and for much of that time he had served as The Observer's critic*". (see R. Findlater, Banned, op.cit. p.114).

Finally, the typescript carries pencilled markings next to the characters' names and these are identical to those given by Brighthouse for the first production.<sup>(54)</sup> There are also two alterations by Houghton and these concern the engagement period between Alan and Beatrice which has been reduced from thirteen to ~~el~~even months.<sup>(55)</sup> Other than that the typescript is unaltered.

5. Ensemble acting : Lewis Casson and the play

The fact that the Horniman Company did act the play was crucial. One of the play's greatest requirements was the ability of the cast to play in ensemble, a technique not that prevalent at the time yet characteristic of the Gaiety. All the rehearsals took place at the Coronet during the Company's professional engagement: the cast rehearsed and still managed to produce a change of play each night.<sup>(56)</sup> Much of the credit for this went to the cast in general ("*everyone liked the play from the start*")<sup>(57)</sup> but to Lewis Casson in particular. Casson (1875-1969) had a great deal of success in the theatre, being knighted for his services in 1945, and he was, of course, married to Sybil Thorndike.<sup>(58)</sup> His directing technique and its contribution to

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54. The Works, Vol.3, p.309. Ada, however, is the only character not filled in on the typescript.
55. See p.17, Act 1 and p.3, Act 2 of typescript.
56. Pogson, p.126, and p.246 supra.
57. *ibid.*
58. John Casson, Lewis and Sybil : a memoir, Collins, 1972, *passim*.

the theatre has been well argued by his grand-daughter<sup>(59)</sup> and it is particularly relevant to Hindle Wakes.

As an actor at the Court Theatre (1904-7) Casson had "*worshipped Barker*" (p.34),<sup>(60)</sup> and later spoke of himself as "*a missionary carrying on Barker's work in the North of England*" (p.83). On Payne's resignation in 1911<sup>(61)</sup> he took over as director. Apart from being influenced by the detailed approaches to drama by Poel, Barker and Boucicault, he also "*inherited from Payne an awareness of the importance of the ensemble*" (p.118), a quality Basil Dean was to tell Dr. Devlin made the Gaiety troupe "*irresistible*" (p.118). It was his production of Hindle Wakes that was finally to establish his reputation as a director:

*Casson gave the play the sensitive and meticulous production which acquired him a reputation as a 'realistic' director.* (p.125)

so much so that the eminent dramatic critic Clement Scott wrote that the play was

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59. The study was initially written as a Ph.D. thesis by Diana M. Devlin Graham, 'The Dreamer and the Maker : a study of Lewis Casson's work in the Theatre', University of Minnesota, 1972. It has since been modified and published as A Speaking Part : Lewis Casson and the theatre of his time, Hodder and Stoughton, 1982. The thesis records (p.2) that when Lewis Casson died Sybil Thorndike received over 2,000 condolences including some from Australia's Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi and Lord Mountbatten. On p.76 of the book one finds more information about the set and the actors of the original production of Hindle Wakes.
60. All references, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the Ph.D. thesis.
61. Dr. Devlin notes that Pogson (p.112) greatly underestimates the reason behind Payne's resignation; it was due to a major difference of opinion with Miss Horniman. Payne wanted a much more esoteric-type of theatre (see p.115 of Dr. Devlin's thesis).

*culled straight from the heart of life. It is in the wonderful interpretation that 'Hindle Wakes' excels. Seldom, save in the French theatre of the Antoine School, (62) has an audience been awakened from its usually despondent lethargy by such enlightened art. The long dialogues are delivered with so much reality and perfection of truth that you sit spellbound and dumb with attention .... As a revelation in unstaginess, tricklessness and skill alone, Miss Horniman's company will fairly astonish you. (63)*

This point was indeed noted both by Houghton and the actor-manager Arthur Bouchier (of whom more will be said later in Ch. 9). Houghton had told a critic that he was grateful for the acting ability so highly portrayed by the Company in its presentation of Hindle Wakes. (64) Bouchier, in a letter to a newspaper, corroborated the play's intrinsic ensemble requisite and also highlighted another fact about the play's initial history:

*After Miss Horniman's original production of 'Hindle Wakes', the author's agent, in sending me the play to read, opined that, to ensure pecuniary success in the West End for the then unknown Mr. Stanley Houghton, an actor of established position should appear in the part of the hero's(?) [sic] father.*

*On reading the play I was sorely tempted by the fine part which offered itself to me, but declined it, feeling that any attempt at focusing the attention of the audience on to one character would destroy the atmosphere ... (65)*

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62. André Antoine (1858-1943). He revolutionized French acting: "his influence, not only in France, but all over Europe and in America, has been incalculable, and he helped more than anyone to deliver Europe from the domination of the 'well-made' play and to establish the reputation of Ibsen and his followers in France". (O.C.T. p.31).
63. Dr. Devlin quotes this review in her thesis, p.126.
64. See fn.10 supra for details.
65. Printed in the Daily Mail, 30 Aug.1913, H.C. Vol.L.

Casson's belief in Poel was to be significant. Poel (1852-1934), whom Casson had met, developed a form of theatrical speech that was devoted entirely to making the thoughts of the writer significant to the audience and projecting them on a scale commensurate with the size of the building or the audience. The art of the actor, in Poel's view, consisted in making the stylised speech appear to be natural: *"this doctrine and the skill became Lewis's theatrical religion",* <sup>(66)</sup> and hence Casson's insistence on pitch, tone and deliverance. Akin to this was the acting: Casson had specific rules whose application was to ensure the success of Hindle Wakes:

1. *Invent a character appropriate to the dramatist's design.*
2. *Present that character on a scale commensurate with the size of the building so as to create the illusion that the character was an autonomous, living being, making manifest to the audience its thoughts, emotions (spoken or unspoken), and compelling the audience to think and feel with it.*
3. *To co-operate with others in the creation of the emotional tension, atmosphere and shape of the play, subordinating, as far as is necessary, the individual to the whole.*
4. *To set a standard of clear, lucid speech, and to show forth in rhythm, tone, melody and movement, the beauty of the form latent in the written play.* <sup>(67)</sup>

The Cassons knew Houghton well <sup>(68)</sup> and Lewis, aware that Houghton had directed amateur productions, may have discussed much of the above with him.

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66. John Casson, Lewis and Sybil : a memoir, op.cit. p.81.

67. Adapted from Lewis and Sybil : a memoir, op.cit. p.238. See also pp.256-7 for a detailed and interesting analysis of audibility.

68. Elizabeth Sprigge, Sybil Thorndike Casson, op.cit. p.87.



6. The play : a London success

The play was an immediate success. Miss Horniman collected over 145 separate press notices from its first showing until 4 September 1912.<sup>(69)</sup> They ranged from sheer adulation to downright condemnation and sparked off a whole series of letters to editors from all walks of life, including the Church, the Suffragettes and other playwrights. Pogson, devoting a whole chapter to the play, wrote that it was

*difficult ... to recapture the excitement caused by Hindle Wakes ... it loomed large in the history of the Gaiety [Company]. Not only did Miss Horniman's company find a wider public; rightly or wrongly it became identified in the public mind as the typical repertory play ... and ... helped to change the course and policy of Miss Horniman's undertaking. (p.125)*

The big dailies were all quick to include the play in their editions of 18 June: The Daily Telegraph began

*a very remarkable performance of a very remarkable play [by an] author .... possessed of an admirable dramatic instinct, a fine appreciation of the dialogue, and a close study of Lancashire character and life.*

The ensemble acting was highly commended as a "*clever interplay of character which gives distinction to the piece*". The Times, more guarded, noted that despite "*its cynicism and occasional grossness*", it "*won favour by the truthfulness of its homely detail and the sincerity of its players*". Indeed, "*it is refreshing to get away from the familiar stage-morality and stage-language*", and notably, "*they all act as though they meant it, yet without over-emphasis and without histrionic antics*". The Daily Mail said much the same:

*the story is perhaps rather a slight one to cover three acts, but as the author has a real sense of character, a keen eye for a dramatic situation, and can cap a good line with a better without sacrificing truth to mere verbal cleverness, the interest never flags.*

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69. See H.C. Vol.I.

The Manchester Guardian, from its London correspondent, was quick to point out the play's defects despite it being *"extremely well received, and the author called at the end"*. It was seen as having *"too many expected moments and a tendency to underline situations, and lighter passages"*. This critic, R.H.G. (presumably R.H. Grotton) was also a member of the Stage Society and he added that *"the plot itself follows a line which one or two earlier Stage Society performances have made a shade too familiar"*. Houghton took great exception to this review, particularly from The Manchester Guardian of all papers. What he did has already been mentioned.<sup>(70)</sup> The Westminster Gazette likewise found fault, wishing that the play had ended after Beatrice had refused Alan and insisted he marry Fanny, *"with the assumption that the marriage would take place"*. The Sunday Times, reporting a week later than the above, declared that the play had *"such qualities that they outweigh the faults of discursiveness"*, with all characters, save Sir Timothy Farrar, being natural:

*they seem lifted bodily from the little community depicted .... The girl is the finest portrayal of all. She is to a certain extent a new figure with regard to fiction and certainly on the stage. One wonders how she could have passed the censor, but it is a good thing that she did .... It heralds the movement of the future .... 'Hindle Wakes' is of greater value than a mere faithful picture of Midland [sic] life, because it forces the hearer to give earnest thought to that which in our community is always repressed under the shield of tradition, convention, and even education.*

These reviews are no more than an evaluation of the aims and objectives decided upon first by Houghton in the writing and later by Casson in the directing.

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70. See p. 124 supra for the full details of this incident.

Many examples of extreme praise could be cited, from "one of the most realistic and original plays in the modern English repertory" to "a work of extraordinary sensitiveness". It is not surprising that during the two Stage Society performances many offers were made to Houghton to stage the play commercially,<sup>(71)</sup> whilst contracts were also offered to write others.<sup>(72)</sup> Miss Horniman managed to revise her schedule for the final week of her Coronet season (see p.246) and stage the play twice, and also include his The Younger Generation.<sup>(73)</sup> She may have also been influenced by the critics' reports of the last two performances: for example, The Pall Mall Gazette (20 June) noted that,

*like a good hostess, she has left some of her best wine for the end of the feast .... The acting ... has once more been a revelation to London playgoers .... How it is appreciated was shown last night in the cheering that arose from all parts of the house, from the stalls to the gallery, when the play was over, calling up the curtain many times. "Curtains" in London are often mechanical. Last night they were honest.* (74)

It would seem that she was intent on staging it for even longer as a result of this success but surprisingly Casson objected: "Mr. Casson thought that three more performances at the Coronet would exhaust its attractiveness in London".<sup>(75)</sup> How wrong he was to be.

According to Brighouse the play was then sent to The Playhouse followed by The Court Theatre, both in London. However, such transitions were

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71. e.g. see The Referee, 23 June 1912, H.C. Vol.I.

72. See Ch.7, p.200.

73. Pogson, pp.128 and 207, i.e. Wed, 19 and Fri, 21 June for Hindle Wakes and Sat. 22 for The Younger Generation.

74. H.C. Vol.I.

75. Manchester Evening News, 30 Nov. 1920, H.C. Vol.Q.

not anywhere near as smooth as he makes them sound. Much toil and trouble went on behind the apparently graceful change-overs.

(Table A on p. 317 lists the play's early venues chronologically).

It would seem that Houghton, on passing the play to Miss Horniman in 1911, was obliged to follow a set routine regarding rights. According to Iden Payne,

*the reason I have frequently required authors to sign an agreement for the entire rights has almost invariably been my contention that the fact of production at Miss Horniman's theatre is of so much assistance to an author that he ought to be prepared to give her a commission on all royalties during the continuation of the agreement. (76)*

Such must have been the case with Houghton as seen in a letter from him to a man who had obviously approached him at the Aldwych during the Stage Society production of the play:

*Dear Mr. Whelen,*

*Many thanks for your kind congratulations ... I was rather embarrassed by your enquiry about the rights of HINDLE when you asked me in front of Miss Horniman. She evidently doesn't know that she has no interest in it at all outside Manchester, and I hardly liked to tell her so in public. All rights are held by me, except the Manchester rights for three years which are hers. (77)*

The recipient of this letter must have been Frederick Whelen, a founder member of the Stage Society and manager of 'The Afternoon Theatre' at His Majesty's, London. He was also literary secretary to Sir. H. Beerbohm Tree.<sup>(78)</sup> Why he did not approach Miss Horniman directly is unknown, except perhaps that he was not on speaking terms with her at the time. In a letter dated 7 June 1912 Whelen had written to Miss

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76. Payne to Dean, 26 Oct.1910, Dean Collection.

77. The original letter (19 June 1912) is located in Manchester Central Reference Library, Theatre Collection, filed under 'Horniman : a letter to a Mr. Whelen'.

78. See T.H. Dickinson, The Contemporary Drama of England, Murray, 1920, p.158 and Edward Knoblock, Round the Room, Chapman and Hall, 1939, pp.117-118, and also a letter from Whelen to Basil Dean, 8 Dec.1909 in Dean Collection.

Horniman a very terse note (the context of which is unknown):

*Your letter simply appals me. That you should dare to even think that I am "anti" is more than I can stand. I shall never get over this!* (79)

Meanwhile she had set off to Germany,<sup>(80)</sup> probably on holiday, and Houghton became anxious to get Hindle Wakes staged elsewhere in London. He wrote to her (presumably in Germany) on 24 June 1912:

*Thanks so much for your postcard. The enthusiasm is most gratifying - I imagine it was mostly excited by the fact that it was your last night. They wanted to thank you. I suppose there wasn't enough demand for 'Hindle Wakes' to justify an attempt to take any old theatre and try to run it for the summer while your actors have nothing to do. I've never seen such notices; it is a pity that they couldn't be turned to advantage. But this is commercial! 'The Saturday Review' amused me - delightfully funny - but I hope wrong. (81) 'The New Age' is a scandal. The man is mad and wants horsewhipping.* (82)

*You may be amused to hear that Cyril Maude wants me to write him a play. Is that a compliment to you or not?*

*It is doubtful.* (83)

The tone of the letter is interesting, and reminiscent of the one in What I have had (p.178): calculated diffidence. One almost senses Houghton holding back - but only just. Note the sentence "*But this*

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79. The letter has newspaper clippings stuck on the back of it. It is located (inverted) on p.54 of H.C. Vol.I. The clippings are not related.
80. She was interviewed by The Pall Mall Gazette "on her return from Germany" between 4-9 Aug.1912. H.C. Vol.I.
81. The Saturday Review, Vol.113, 22 June 1912, p.774. An article by John Palmer entitled "'Hindle Wakes' and The Stage Society": it generally praised the play, particularly Act I.
82. The New Age, Vol.XI, No.5, 30 May 1912 and No.8, 20 June 1912: Both contain articles by Huntley Carter: the former (p.114) deals unkindly with The Stage Society; the latter (pp.187-8) deals with Miss Horniman and the Gaiety Company at The Coronet Theatre. It is equally unkind: "gloomy and socialistic" plays "hashed up"; "tons of bombastic verbiage and unwholesome twaddle"; "Manchester attic drama". Houghton was probably referring to this latter article.
83. Letter in Cade Collection. (See fn.85 also).

*is commercial!*" This was an appeal to Miss Horniman's financial interests, a point to be taken up shortly.

Miss Horniman must have been impressed because almost immediately she entered into negotiations for the complete rights of the play, which culminated in a contract fifteen days later. For the sum of £100 (£2,600 in 1981) she acquired "*for a period of five years*" the sole rights for the play in "*the United Kingdom ... and Ireland, the British Colonies and Dependencies (Canada excepted)*". More importantly, she agreed "*within one month ... [to] produce the said play at a first class theatre in London for a run*". The royalties to be paid to Houghton were 5 % on the first £600 (£15,600 in 1981); 7½% on the next £400 (£10,400 in 1981) and 10% on all over £1,000 (£26,000 in 1981). She also agreed "*not to give less than twenty performances ... in each year*".<sup>(84)</sup> Whilst these negotiations were in progress, however, Houghton was making his own enquiries. On 2 July 1912 he told Monkhouse that he had just "*fixed up to write Cyril Maude a long play*".<sup>(85)</sup> It is quite conceivable that Houghton may, at the same time, have also negotiated with Maude to stage Hindle Wakes at his theatre, The Playhouse, beginning 16 July 1912.<sup>(86)</sup> The agreement was more than just a kind gesture on the part of Maude who did not need his theatre anyway as it was high summer and he was off on holiday:

*In July when I went away for a rest, and later on tour, 'Hindle Wakes' came on at The Playhouse, and was a great success. It was played by Miss Horniman's Manchester Repertoire Company.*<sup>(87)</sup>

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84. Contract dated 9 July 1912 in the Stanley Houghton Collection.  
85. See p.201 *supra* for source and more details of interest.  
86. Pogson, p.128 gives this date and venue. It certainly was not the Aldwych again as listed by A. Nicoll, *op.cit.* p.734.  
87. Behind the Scenes with Cyril Maude by Himself, *op.cit.* p.225.

Apparently, Miss Horniman was unaware of this agreement.<sup>(88)</sup> Replying to a letter from her at his holiday hotel in Criccieth, Houghton wrote that,

*The whole 'Playhouse' business must have been a surprise to you. It was fixed up so suddenly, and so curiously, in your absence, in the interval between the Coronet Season & Mr. Hey's wedding.*<sup>(89)</sup>

The letter continued:

*I see last week's receipts were about £6 [£156 in 1981] up on the previous week; an increase of any sort is significant, I understand, as we get further into August. Charles Hawtreay (90) believes so much in the play that he sent a friend (the actor Reginald Owen) (91) up here to see me about it. He wants to take up your company in it if by any chance Maude loses heart & wants to stop ... he personally believes there is a fortune (and if for him - for you & me) in it for London. He will find a theatre and put it on as soon as Maude tires. I have told Mr. Casson all this, & he has written Hawtreay agreeing, I believe. At the same time it should be kept absolutely secret between the three of us, I think.*

Up to this point the letter was almost conciliatory, but then it developed into something more personal and warming. He began by telling her of his momentous decision:

*I have given up business, and embarked on authorship alone. It is risky, I suppose. I can never thank you enough for the chance you have given me of getting a footing, and the encouragement & experience your productions of my plays have given me. I started to write expressly and absolutely for you; had the Gaiety not been there I wouldn't have written a line. I can assure you that I shall never forget it; and if ever I can do you & the Gaiety a good turn you have only to command me.*

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88. Dr. Devlin, op.cit. p.76, maintains that Miss Horniman "nosed around and persuaded Cyril Maude at the Playhouse to let her put on 'Hindle Wakes' there". This was not the case.
89. Letter from the Marine Hotel, 13 Aug. 1912, Cade Collection. Houghton had been there since at least 7 Aug. Mr. Heys was Miss Horniman's business manager at the Gaiety (see p.209 supra).
90. See pp.203-4, 208 for a detailed discussion concerning Hawtreay.
91. 1887-1972.

Houghton obviously meant all of this very sincerely. However, he also had to be sure that the play would continue after The Playhouse run. In the event the above offer by Hawtrey did not materialise and Houghton had to begin searching again for another suitable venue.

The play meanwhile ran at Maude's theatre until 26 September, when he then required the place for himself.<sup>(92)</sup> It had lasted 83 performances<sup>(93)</sup> and some very important people had been to see it, enticed, no doubt, by "*the most famous poster of 1912*",<sup>(94)</sup> which read 'Should Fanny Marry Alan?' In late July Lloyd George<sup>(95)</sup> attended, only to be verbally assaulted by a suffragette in the audience demanding to know, "*What about votes for women?*"<sup>(96)</sup> and in August the Prince of Wales and his brother Prince Albert (later George VI) "*were in the front row of the stalls*".<sup>(97)</sup> Recently some 27 large black and white photographs of the production were discovered: they would appear to have been presented to Houghton at some time.<sup>(98)</sup>

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92. Introduction, p.1. Actual day given in Daily Express, 18 Sept.1912, H.C.Vol.I, but see also p.264 infra.
93. According to the Evening News, 30 Sept.1912 and The Stage 5 Dec.1912, H.C. Vol.I.
94. J.C. Trewin, The Edwardian Theatre, Blackwell, 1976, p.102.
95. He was Chancellor of the Exchequer at the time.
96. Daily Mirror, 27 July 1912, H.C. Vol.I.
97. Unidentified clipping dated 21 Aug.1912, H.C. Vol.I.
98. Now in the Stanley Houghton Collection (see Appendix 2). One of the photographs is reproduced in Pogson, p.129. Another is to be found in The Bystander, 21 Aug.1912, H.C. Vol.I. The photographs show the original cast except for Charles Bibby (who played Christopher Hawthorn) who is replaced here by Leonard Mudie - a change made at the start of The Playhouse season. The part of Beatrice Farrar is here taken by Jane Savile, a part originally played by Sybil Thorndike, John Casson (Sybil Thorndike's son) informed me by letter (10 Jan.1982) that she had only just returned to work after the birth of her baby (see p.246 supra). She ceased playing the part "*three weeks into the Playhouse run*".



Throughout that particular run the critics extolled Houghton's virtues: *"a master of characterisation"* (Daily Graphic); *"a sane and vigorous philosophy of marriage"* (Evening News); *"racy, native wit"* (Daily Chronicle); *"the dialogue [has] so much profound observation and contemplation of real life"*, and that was *"a rare merit in English plays"* (The Sunday Times); *"the play of the season"* (The People); *"the novelty of the unconventional conclusion"* (Punch); *"realistic to the point of brutality"* (Sporting Times); *"emphatically one of the outstanding achievements of the year .... In mere brainwork, sense of character, and knowledge of human nature this story ... is far ahead of any play we have had in London ... not even Mr. Somerset Maugham could give its author tips, whether in wit or stagecraft"* (The Sunday Times).<sup>(99)</sup> With press notices like those it was no wonder that the intended run of just three weeks was extended to over seven weeks.<sup>(100)</sup>

7. The play : published and as a novel

Success was also being achieved at the publishers. On 13 July 1912 Houghton signed an agreement with Sidgwick and Jackson Ltd., allowing them *"the sole and exclusive rights during the term of copyright of printing, publishing and selling in volume form in all parts of the World, his play entitled 'HINDLE WAKES'".*<sup>(101)</sup> The contract also

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99. All are in H.C. Vol.I: July.

100. See article by E.T. Heys (Miss Horniman's business manager) in the Sunday Chronicle, 4 Aug.1912, H.C. Vol.I.

101. Contract in the Stanley Houghton Collection.

agreed to secure the author's rights in the United States, which it did on 26 July 1912. Interestingly, however, when copyright expired there in 1968 new laws were being formulated which temporarily extended the copyright to 1971.<sup>(102)</sup> Royalties in the United Kingdom were agreed as follows: 10% on the published price of the first thousand copies sold; 15% thereafter plus "*half of the net profits*" derived from other sales. Significantly the edition carried the Manchester Swan Club insignia, (see p.96 ) and up to 1928 went through ten impressions, the first three being July, September and November 1912. It is now out of print and at the time of Houghton's death "*six thousand copies of 'Hindle Wakes' [had] been sold and the sale [went] briskly on*".<sup>(103)</sup>

In April 1927 Harold Brighthouse approached Houghton's mother with a request to turn the play into a novel:<sup>(104)</sup>

*somebody, it seemed, was going to do this: I had a loyalty to Houghton and a feeling that if I did not do it, it would be done worse.*<sup>(105)</sup>

On 5 April 1927 a formal contract was signed whereby Brighthouse undertook "*the novelisation of the said play ... within six months*".

Royalties were divided 60% to Brighthouse and 40% to Houghton's executors.<sup>(106)</sup>

He worked very quickly and the first edition of 100,000 copies was sold

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102. Letter from Samuel French Ltd. to Houghton's nephew, 13 May 1963, in the possession of Mrs. D. Caw of Sale.

103. The Manchester Guardian, 18 Dec.1913, p.6.

104. Brighthouse (with Charles Forrest) had already done the same with his play Hobson's Choice as Hobson's, Constable, 1917.

105. What I have had, op.cit. p.99.

106. Contract in the Stanley Houghton Collection.

out by July, with reprints of 50,000 at a time being sold in August, October and December.<sup>(107)</sup> Brighouse recollected that it sold a total of half a million copies.<sup>(108)</sup> He prefaced the novel with a quotation from his first and favourite one-act play,<sup>(109)</sup> Lonesome-Like (1911), which by 1958 had had over three thousand recorded performances:<sup>(110)</sup>

*We works cruel 'ard in th'mill, an' when us plays,  
us plays as 'ard too, an' small blame to us either.*

This quotation would have served as an admirable motto for the article Houghton wrote concerning the Lancashire Wakes (see p.233). It also demonstrates, in its own way, the implications that lay behind Hindle Wakes as a play. A study of the novel shows these implications and more. It had the benefit of some sixteen years, in which attitudes became relatively more liberated. Also the novel was not subjected to censorship as such (see p.304). The book not only contains much of Houghton's original dialogue but also some very 'advanced' thoughts: "*The Tower is a phallic emblem*" (p.56) or, with reference to Alan's invitation to stay at the hotel in Llandudno, "*how satisfyingly right!*" (p.66) or "*the point, as far as Fanny went was that Alan was not a 'real' man, but a Wakes co-honeymooner*" (p.103), or indeed, "*they were Pan and Echo in the woods: a very pagan scene ...*" (p.111). Perhaps the most significant line was

*the old convention was that there would, necessarily,  
be a child; the new was that, artificially, there  
wouldn't.* (p.217)

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107. Harold Brighouse, Hindle Wakes, The Readers' Library Publishing Co. 1927. Houghton and the play are acknowledged on the title page.

108. What I have had, op.cit. p.99. This compares with say Robert Graves, Goodbye to All that, which in 1928 sold 30,000 copies and was regarded as "*a commercial success*". (See F.A. Mumby and I. Norrie, Publishing and Bookselling, Cape, 1974, p.355).

109. What I have had, op.cit. p.183.

110. ibid. p.40.

Many of the above points as seen in the play will be discussed later in the chapter. Finally in 1932 the Daily Herald featured the play under its 'A Play A Day' series, in which Brighouse provided a prose interpretation of famous plays.<sup>(111)</sup>

8. The play : another London venue

In early September Houghton, still convinced that the play would continue to be successful in London, started to look for yet another venue, despite it being "*a desperately hot summer*"<sup>(112)</sup> and therefore not conducive to full houses. He had written to Miss Horniman that

*the business, you see, was close on £800 [£20,800 in 1981] last week. I don't know how that pays Maude, but it must be good for you (as it is for me). It will be fine if you can make a pot of money here to spend in Manchester. Then we may fairly call 'Hindle' a pot-boiler, in more sense than one.*<sup>(113)</sup>

Now this is interesting for two reasons: it shows that Maude did indeed have a financial interest in the play,<sup>(114)</sup> and secondly it explains my earlier point about Miss Horniman's desire to make money - not for personal profit but to plough back into the theatre. The next part of the above letter, however, is curious if one realises that in the article referred to in footnote 114 one finds the information that "*At the Playhouse ... half a dozen London Managers at once placed their theatres at our disposal*", and yet Houghton had had to ask of Miss

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111. 12 Nov.1932, Brighouse Collection. This was the eleventh such article by him.

112. Introduction, p.1.

113. 31 Aug.1912, Cade Collection.

114. See p.257supra and the Daily Mail, 29 Aug. 1913, H.C. Vol.I. in which E.T. Heys (the Gaiety's business manager) noted that Maude's invitation "*was a purely business arrangement such as obtains every week in every provincial theatre*".

Horniman that "if the business gives up as it ought in September, where is the new theatre to come from? Rumour has it that Maude may let us stay on and will find a theatre for himself". (31 Aug.1912, *ibid.*)

The implication is that Miss Horniman had broached the subject with Houghton, or more likely that Houghton had written or discussed it with her at an earlier time. Which ever is correct there is no doubt that Houghton was the driving force. This is further highlighted when shortly afterwards Houghton again wrote to her:

*I have today seen Gertrude Kingston & have got from her the offer of the Little Theatre for 'Hindle' to open a fortnight today: that is two days after the Playhouse run. She is seeing this afternoon (a) her business manager, (b) her architect to find whether the new gallery will be ready, etc. She is very keen, personally. If we do badly, we simply close in a dignified way because the theatre is required for 'Brassbound'; if we do well she promises to hang up Shaw's play for us for a bit. At any rate, it gives us three weeks more in which to find managers who will be only too glad to run us.*

*Now do you give me permission to treat on your behalf with Miss Kingston? I shall see her again this evening if necessary. If so, what terms & conditions must I ask. (115)*

Houghton's approach to Gertrude Kingston (1866-1937) is of particular interest. She was an actress, playwright, producer, author and manager of the above theatre in John Street, Strand, which opened in 1910. G.B. Shaw wrote his Great Catherine for her in 1913.<sup>(116)</sup>

Her ambition was, "with accommodation for barely three hundred people" to

*produce a greater sense of realism on the stage. In her eyes ... actor and audience should be drawn into much smaller compass, if the actor is to be given the chance of playing his part as he would in real life. The actor who fails to be natural, according to Miss Kingston, fails altogether. (117)*

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115. Cade Collection, dated 16 Sept.1912 by Miss Horniman which must have been the date of receipt as evidence in the letter shows it to have been written on 14 Sept.

116. O.C.T. p.536.

117. The Lady's Realm, April 1911, p.634.

P.P. Howe argued that Kingston was greatly influenced by Miss Horniman so much so that she decided to use the latter's ideas for repertory in London. (118) Kingston also visited America frequently where her influence in New York was particularly extensive. (119) Approaching Kingston was then perhaps more of a profound move by Houghton than indicated by the above letter. The interesting philosophy of Kingston must have appealed to Houghton. Unfortunately, the play was not staged there.

Finally, the above letter also helps corroborate Pogson's opinion that Miss Horniman

*did not exploit 'Hindle Wakes' - in fact she has often been blamed for missing a chance of making money to spend on the Gaiety. (120)*

The play in fact was transferred directly from The Playhouse to The Court Theatre where it played to houses "increasingly crowded" (121) for three weeks. In a letter from Houghton to Monkhouse one finds other facts:

*We have got The Court Theatre for 'Hindle Wakes' to go for 3 weeks on Saturday next. (122) Miss H. refuses to run it longer than that. (123)*

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118. The Repertory Theatre: a record and criticism, Secker, 1910, p.205.
119. Constance D'Arcy Mackay, The Little Theatre in the United States, op.cit. pp.55-59. Page 10 notes "*the one real Little Theatre of the British Isles having intimacy, experimentation, and variety of choice of plays with fine ensemble to act them is Gertrude Kingston's Little Theatre*".
120. Pogson, p.134,
121. Introduction, p.1.
122. i.e. from 28 Sept to 19 Oct.1912.
123. 26 Sept,1912, A N M 10; written the very day The Playhouse run terminated.

and squashed in after his signature one finds "*We reach the 100th performance of 'Hindle' in about a fortnight!*"<sup>(124)</sup>. Miss Horniman's acting manager for The Playhouse run, Alfred Beaumont, actually outlined its first London history in a brief letter to The Pall Mall Gazette:

*it was played four times only - twice under the auspices of the Stage Society and twice during Miss Horniman's Summer Season at the Coronet .... Its run at the Playhouse must terminate with Thursday evening's performance, owing to Cyril Maude's new production - 'The Little Cafe', but Miss Horniman has arranged to reproduce it with the same cast for a three weeks season at the Court Theatre, Sloane Square, commencing on Saturday evening next.* (125)

Interestingly the letter ended with the words that the play had "*yet to receive the verdict of a Manchester audience*". This was to follow immediately after a week's break following the final curtain in London on 19 October 1912. For Houghton this was to be an unprecedented situation: his greatest success to date (and in London) with a play not yet performed in his native City. He must have wondered about its possible reception (see p.271). However, before moving on to the Manchester production it would be pertinent to consider one very important person whom Houghton met as a result of the play's success in London.

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124. The Standard, 9 Oct, 1912, H.C. Vol.J. confirms this: 100th performance "*tomorrow evening*".

125. 24 Sept. 1912, H.C. Vol.J. Article printed on 25 Sept.

9. The play and Professor George Pierce Baker

Professor Baker (1866-1935) was *"one of the most vital influences in the formation of modern American dramatic literature and theatre".* (126)

He became the first Professor of Dramatic Literature at Harvard prior to his appointment as Professor of Drama at Yale. His influence was profound, reaching as far as Europe but not far enough for William Archer:

*English Universities, unfortunately, show little tendency to follow suit.* (127)

He founded a course in practical playwriting which later developed into his famous 47 Workshop. Amongst his pupils were Eugene O'Neill (1936 Nobel Prize for Literature) and Edward Sheldon (later an accomplished dramatist who was to be with Houghton on the occasion of the latter's emergency admittance to hospital in Venice: see p.389). Baker was also a friend of both Pinero and H.A. Jones. The latter, in 1906, wrote to his *"old friend"* in gratitude for *"making modern plays a part of the literary course of your students. It is the first recognition that literature and scholarship have given to the modern English Drama".* (128) Even today Baker's Yale Drama School (a strictly graduate programme) is considered to be *"perhaps the most prestigious graduate program in America".* (129)

During the Horniman tour of America in 1911 Professor Baker met up with Casson<sup>(130)</sup> and this probably accounts for his arrival on 1 August 1912

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126. O.C.T. p.67.

127. The Old Drama and the New ; an essay in revaluation, Heineman, 1923, p.377.

128. Doris Arthur Jones, The Life and Letters of Henry Arthur Jones, Gollancz, 1930, p.233.

129. Dr. J Cogdill in a letter to me, 15 Aug, 1983.

130. W.P. Kinne, George Pierce Baker and the American Theatre, Harvard, 1954, p.158.



in Manchester to see the Gaiety in action. He then left for London convinced that the Gaiety was "*educating its own public*" (ibid. p.160). On the second night of his stay in London he went to see Hindle Wakes:

*The play is the best I have seen in years - as fine & sure in technique as Pinero at his best after years of practice - and this, I think, Houghton's second play. Moreover, it is absolutely of the new spirit. On an initial situation the characters act & react & the ensuing complications form out of the individuality of the characters in their reactions even as suspense comes because you do not know just what a character will do, not from suspense in the Scribian sense. (p.161)*

He was so intrigued that he "*wrote Houghton in my enthusiasm*".

Houghton's reply, fortunately, was published in the above book. (131)

It warrants almost complete quotation here because it shows Houghton's private and genuine reaction to such praise and also his "*grace which further ingratiated his excellence*" to Baker:

*Marine Hotel,  
Criccieth,  
August 7 1912*

*Dear Sir*

*It is indeed good of you to express so kindly your opinion of 'Hindle Wakes'. It is, of course, with the utmost pleasure that I read the letter of a man who is a master of his subject, as you are. Had you criticized me adversely I should have listened to you with respect; for your generous praise I cannot sufficiently thank you ...*

The next part of the letter is very significant: it corroborates many of the views later expressed publicly about Houghton and the effect that writing to order had on his standards:

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131. p.161. This now helps explain the apparently 'meaningless' letter in the possession of Samuel French Ltd, dated 1954: it is a request by Kinne to use the letter in publication.

*Your hope that I may write some good plays is one that I echo. I fear, however, that I shall probably be forced to consider the public & the managers more than I have done in 'Hindle Wakes'.* (132)

This is the only known evidence about the matter and bears consideration when looking at his post Hindle Wakes work (see Ch.9). It also means, by implication, that the play was written from observation rather than from any preconceived notions: it was not written to please theatre managers.

A friendship grew out of this letter. On 20 September 1912 for example, one finds Houghton arranging to "call for you [Baker] at the Adelphi ... I suggest this because I may get seats for a theatre, and if so the particular theatre might determine where we should dine. If we are to dress I will let you know in good time ...", and on 2 October 1912, after having "read a play by one of your men called 'The Promised Land'", (133) he was able to venture the opinion that it was "most powerful, if a little confused & overloaded with movement. Surely the author must have done something good since; for that couldn't be a flash in the pan." (134)

Prior to leaving England, Baker was of the sincerest opinion that Houghton had

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132. W.P. Kinne, op.cit. p.161.

133. Edward Carpenter, The Promised Land : a drama of a People's Deliverance in 5 acts (in the Elizabethan Style), 1910.

134. These are the only two letters from Houghton in the Baker Collection at Harvard University. Permission has been granted to quote from them.

*come to stay. I think him a better and subtler technician than Masefield & just because he is first dramatist, second the preacher & theorist & untroubled by experience with paltry rules, theatrically ahead of both Masefield & Galsworthy. But with these three, English drama need have no fear.'* (135)

Such praise from such a distinguished man says much about Houghton but more importantly hints at what he might have been: he died within a year of the above and his death deeply shocked Baker. W.P. Kinne wrote ~~that~~ when news of Houghton's death reached America Baker entered class

*and told us Stanley Houghton had just died; then he went on to the man's work and what a loss it meant to the theatre to have this fresh, original genius cut off in his prime. The hour took on the aspects of a memorial service. It was very personal. The living theatre had suffered, and we were a part of it.* (p.162)

Baker particularly praised Houghton's contribution to the status of the one-act play, linking him with such people as Lady Gregory, Yeats, Synge and O'Neill. (p.282)

As Professor Baker's standing was so high it would be fruitful to consider briefly his theories on drama as seen in his book Dramatic Technique (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1919). In it he uses Houghton (with references to Hindle Wakes) to exemplify an accomplished and technically proficient playwright. The book opens with a general comment similar to that used to explain Houghton's apprenticeship (see p.216) whereby dramatists were not necessarily born but made just like "*the architect, the painter, the sculptor and the musician*". (p.iii). Consequently development was a series of progressions: imitation ("*universal*"); specialization; and individuality - a pattern certainly followed by

Houghton. Indeed, the comment Pinero applied to Robert Louis Stevenson is pertinent in this respect:

*to achieve success on the stage it ["dramatic sense"] must be developed into theatrical talent by hard study and generally by long practice. For theatrical talent consists in the power of making your characters not only tell a story by means of dialogue, but to tell it in such skilfully devised form and order. (pp.5-6)*

Galsworthy had said almost the same thing in one phrase: "Character is plot" (p.66). Houghton's forte, as already seen, was characterisation and dialogue.

At that time plays with only one set and no change of scene were considered dated in that "*lately there have been signs that ... audiences are growing weary of plays of only one set*". However, "*the newer group of dramatists permit themselves changes of scene even within the act*" (p.130). Baker then uses Hindle Wakes as a good example, whereby Act I, Scene 1, the kitchen of the Hawthorne's house, becomes in Scene 2 the breakfast room of the Jeffcote's house. Such a change he notes did run the risk of destroying the illusion if a break in the drama occurred. Hence speed was of the essence, a point Houghton was fully conversant with as seen in his stage directions for the above scene change:

*The scene for Act I, Scene I, should be very small, as a contrast to the room at the Jeffcotes'. It might well be set inside the other scene so as to facilitate the quick change between scenes 1 and 2, Act I.*

*(The Works, Vol.2, p.87)*

Another technique was the ability to immediately create interest and exposition, without any detriment to the denouement: suspense.

Many critics of Hindle Wakes picked up this very point. For example Punch commented on "*the novelty of the unconventional conclusion*",

whilst the Globe wrote of Houghton's "capacity to discard the ordinary stage technique in favour of a natural manner of bringing his characters on and off stage ... the art which conceals art [and therefore will] enhance considerably that newer technique of the stage". It also saw the keeping of Fanny off stage for a long period after the opening as "an adroit piece of craftsmanship". Vanity Fair saw "the denouement [as] positively startling in its unconventionality".<sup>(136)</sup> The greatest praise, in terms of meaningful criticism, came from a Russian critic - the Secretary of the Moscow Art Theatre, Mr. Michael Lykiardopulos. That theatre had played a significant role in the establishment of Naturalism in the theatre. Founded in 1898 by Stanislavsky and Danchenko, and responsible for first staging Chekhov,<sup>(137)</sup> this theatre had an "unassailable reputation".<sup>(138)</sup> Of Hindle Wakes the Secretary said:

*I think it a good play - for England, where contemporary dramatic literature ... is not very high .... In 'Hindle Wakes', what pleases me is the unconventionality ... with an original plot and a very good denouement ... the best I have seen this summer. As for the acting, it is perhaps the best I have seen in England, and perhaps, in the whole of Europe .... The whole evening convinced me ... that English drama can only be brought back, from the level of after-dinner amusement, to real Art with a capital A.*<sup>(139)</sup>

Characterisation and dialogue were undoubtedly the skills of Hindle Wakes: "the permanent value of a play" (Baker, p.234). Houghton avoided types, that is, "characteristics so marked that even the

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136. All articles in H.C. Vol.I, dated respectively 24, 25, 23, 24 July 1912.

137. O.C.T. p.657.

138. ibid.

139. The Pall Mall Gazette, 10 Aug.1912, H.C. Vol.I.

*unobservant cannot have failed to discern them in their fellow men".*

(p.235). His characters inclined towards "individualization", that is "differentiation within the types, running from broad distinctions to presentation of very subtle differences". (ibid.)

Thus,

*all the better recent drama emphasizes the comic or tragic conflict in human beings caused by many contradictory impulses and ideas, some mutually exclusive, some negating others to a considerable extent, some apparently dormant for a time, yet ready to spring into great activity at unseen moments. (ibid.)*

William Archer had noted this earlier in drama and added that characterization needed "psychology ... the exploration of character, the bringing of hitherto unsurveyed tracts within the circle of our knowledge and comprehension".<sup>(140)</sup> This was what Houghton did in Hindle Wakes. His dialogue not only allowed his characters to develop as individuals but also to present inner thoughts as well as giving vital information to the audience and yet seeming natural. The opening of the play illustrates this very well. It showed what Baker called "the rapid development of an interesting situation through two characters as individuals", whereby they each become "more distinct and interesting with every line", yet concealing the fact that "seven important bits of information are given before Fanny enters" (p.322 ff). His term for this was "characterized dialogue" (p.327) which differed from dialogue merely intended to pass on facts. William Archer had elsewhere taken the point further:

*a better piece of drama than this opening scene [of Hindle Wakes] was never witten ... [Houghton was] using with skill and originality an instrument which had been perfected for him by scores of predecessors during half a century of rapid evolution .... [he had] an alert intelligence, a keen eye for character and fine technical instinct. (141)*

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140. Quoted by Baker, op.cit. p.237.

141. The Old Drama and the New: an essay in revaluation, op.cit. p.375.

Central to this was the role of dialect: *"the use of words and phrases heard among such people to make characterization vivid and convincing"*. (Baker p.340). Use of dialect was highly desirable if used accurately and was clear and consistent: *"one of the chief aids to characterization"*. (ibid. p.343). That Houghton should use it was predictable, although he had to add a long note to the play explaining it.<sup>(142)</sup> It was crucial to his *"transcript from life"* as he once called the play. Moreover, *"This play is about Lancashire people"*.<sup>(143)</sup> Houghton was familiar with the works of Synge (see p.276) and therefore must have known his 'Preface' to The Playboy of the Western World (1907) in which it is written that:

*the imagination of the people, and the language they use, is rich and living .... [and] in a good play every speech should be as fully flavoured as a nut or apple.* (144)

He may also have known Ibsen's view that, *"style must conform to the degree of ideality which pervades the representation"*, in that, *"characters ... become indistinct and indistinguishable from one another, if ... all of them [are allowed] to speak in one and the same rhythmical measure"*.<sup>(145)</sup> That Houghton intended all of this is beyond doubt: writing to Monkhouse about Mary Broome, a play similar in places to Hindle Wakes, he said that,

*it struck me that you were not concerned so much with the outsides as the insides of your people - a pretty obvious thing to say of novelists now, but not yet of dramatists, although Ibsen has been dead a long while. And I thought you were so keen on tearing out the insides that you left the outsides to take care of themselves rather ... you tried to reveal the people by what they said more than by what they did.* (146)

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142. The Works, Vol.2, p.88.

143. *ibid.*

144. John Millington Synge: Plays, Poems and Prose, Dent, 1978, pp.107-8.

145. Quoted by Baker, *op.cit.* pp.418-19.

146. 15 Oct.1911 A N M 12.

He gave the example of where Mrs. Timbrell, in Act 2, stated to her husband that, "*You never paid me any wages*", and to this he confessed that, "*I was perfectly excited over it. I actually wanted to get up and cheer or make a noise of some sort ... What I admired [was] ... the flash of light [in] the soul of the old lady who had been wearing her mask all these years*". It is not surprising to find that, as already stated (see p.239 supra) appended to this letter should be Houghton's postscript announcing his latest play:

*... 'Hindle Wakes' .... [in which] the theme you see is almost identical ... only mine is an attempt at simple realistic drama.*

This concern for a dialogue which carried the meaning of the play can also be seen in another letter from Houghton. It concerns a play called Patriots (1912) by Lennox Robinson, which he had just been to see:

*This play is living drama, prompted by actual burning questions, and it makes an instant appeal to me .... I and Brighouse banged on the floor and shouted bravo, and generally tried to play up to a gentleman in the gallery who cheered all the Fenian and revolutionary sentiments. (147)*

His later interview with the Daily Dispatch now becomes clearer with the above comments in mind: Hindle Wakes

*was not a pamphlet, and its action and characters must be tested not by the touchstone of right and wrong, but by the test of truth and untruth. In a sentence, it is an essay in realism. (24 Aug.1912, p.4)*

Two more articles written by Houghton for the press at this time are also worth consideration, particularly since they give a contemporary view of drama by a playwright. The first article, entitled 'Family Plays' (Daily Mail, 2 September 1912, p.4.) looked at what he called "*the new taste*":



*There is no doubt about the present taste in good plays .... presenting a picture of a group or family intimately observed, depending for their interest and variety upon subtleties and differentiations of character rather than upon the incidents of a cunningly devised plot. That taste is emphatic, and it has set in quite suddenly.*

He gave several examples of this new "genre" as he named it:

Milestones (Bennett and Knoblock, 1912); Bunt Pulls the Strings, (Moffatt, 1911); Rutherford and Son (Sowerby, 1912); and What Every Woman Knows (Barrie, 1908). These plays he believed had done "*the spade work in a new field and [made] ... it possible for some of us lesser agriculturists [sic] to raise a crop*". This change was, "*the substitution of character for plot*", that is the change from (as Professor Baker was to mention later in Dramatic Technique) "*rather generalised ... broad types of character*" and the "*construction of an elaborate plot and ... the march of the scenes*", which led to "*madness, to utter sterility and drabness .... to a mechanical arrangement .... [and] to the complete subordination of plot to character, with its attendant danger of utter firmlessness and confusion*". He cited Tchekhof's [sic] Cherry Orchard as an example of this latter type yet added: "*wrongly, as I believe, for it has a most definite if subtle sense of form running through it*".

Another advantage of substituting character for plot, he argued, was that it paved the way for the representation of "*the middle and lower classes*" on stage. He saw Synge's Riders to the Sea (1904) as an excellent example of presenting "*a group of simply, naturally drawn, poverty-stricken fisherfolk*". (148)

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148. Reference has already been made to the similarities between Houghton's The Master of the House (1909) and Synge's The Shadow of the Glen (1903): see Ch.6, p.173.

Finally, in this article, Houghton made an important and relevant point: if proper attention was paid to character then *"one plot may even last a man for several plays, all of which shall be different"*. Thus many of his own plays, whilst centring around the 'generation-gap' were still unique in that the characterization of each enabled them to be different. More importantly, and perhaps in answer to some of his critics, he stated that *"several dramatists of vastly differing manners might use precisely the same plot and turn out plays so varied"*. I shall return to this point presently. Meanwhile, it is perhaps no exaggeration to say that of all Houghton's plays it is in Hindle Wakes that one finds the best examples of that dialogue which enabled character to be highlighted. With the demise of the soliloquy and the aside<sup>(149)</sup> the dramatist now had the added difficulty of maintaining a reality whilst enabling as full a picture as possible to be presented to the audience via characterization. Edward Storer hinted at this point when he briefly mentioned that Houghton had

*a habit of making them [his characters] talk as their subconscious minds might think, but as they certainly would never speak.* (150)

The implication here, as in other critics' remarks, was that it was a fault of the play and not a merit, since such a method was 'unreal'. Bearing in mind the restrictions that operate on any dramatists, this contention is unfounded. Professor Baker, at least, acknowledged this:

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149. A convention which had virtually disappeared by the 1890's: see The Revels History of Drama in English, Vol.VII, Methuen, 1978, p.12. Houghton had used both of these conventions in his early works (see Ch.2).

150. The British Review, Vol.IV, No.3, Dec.1913, p.416.

*In everyday speech ... we do not say our say in the most compact, characteristic and entertaining fashion. To gain all that, we must use more concentration and selection than we give to ordinary human intercourse .... Dramatic dialogue is human speech so wisely edited for use under the conditions of the stage that ... events are presented in character.* (151)

In this respect Houghton was a pioneer if one considers the use made of such a technique by people like Beckett and Pinter decades later.

This review of characterization can now be rounded off by briefly considering a final article by Houghton in the London Evening News (20 Aug.1912, p.4) entitled: *"Dialect Plays - are they successful at home?"* His major thesis was based on the answer to the question of whether or not particular classes liked to see either their own or another class represented on stage. He believed that the latter point was generally the more accepted since dialect plays portrayed to Londoners, for example, *"freaks whose unfamiliar antics are the cause of much entertainment"*, whilst outside London such plays were often ignored because they only represented daily reality to the public anyway. However, *"upper-crust pieces"* were successful in London despite their portraying a reality common to many in their audiences. The difference was crucial though: *"they show reality also but one that is more palatable"*. There was also, he argued, a third category: plays that dealt with *"some vague indeterminate class in which people who were supposed to bring up a family on £4 a week wore dresses by Paquin"*. (152) Houghton's general conclusion was that the London

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151. Dramatic Technique, op.cit. p.397.

152. She was a leading dressmaker who in 1891 became *"the first successful woman in haute couture"*. She numbered Royalty amongst her customers. By 1900 she had a branch in London. See Elizabeth Ewing, History of Twentieth Century Fashion, Batsford, 1974, p.15, and Doris L. Moore, The Woman in Fashion, Batsford, 1949, p.154.

middle-class audiences liked to see both themselves on the stage because it was familiar (as indeed did the Manchester middle-classes) and Lancashire plays because they were unfamiliar. Lancashire audiences, on the other hand, liked to see London plays because they were seeing something unfamiliar to them but they rarely liked to see plays reflecting their own daily lives. What Houghton was doing, of course, was trying to anticipate the Manchester reception in October: "*How will Lancashire like 'Hindle Wakes'?*"<sup>(153)</sup>

10. The play : similarities with other plays

Similarity of theme was a point not only acknowledged by Houghton but, as seen, recommended since the true skill, and therefore the individuality, lay in the characterization (see p.277). Critics, however, quick to point out the former, never considered the latter. Of all the plays with similarities it is perhaps worth considering only three: Mary Broome (A.N. Monkhouse, 1911); The Eldest Son (J. Galsworthy, 1909); The Last of the De Mullins (St. John Hankin, 1908).<sup>(154)</sup>

Reference has already been made to Mary Broome (which incidentally, the critics saw as "*merely Shaw and Hankin, with a dash of Granville Barker*").<sup>(155)</sup>

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153. In this same article he also stated that many manufacturing towns like Oldham (Lancs) did not have quality theatres or companies. He was quickly taken to task by one Oldham theatre manager whose reply appeared in a later edition of the same paper (23 Aug.1912, H.C. Vol.I.)

154. Space does not permit a consideration of those other plays often regarded by the critics of the day as similar whether they be alike in theme, tone, plot or just held to be similar: Caste (Robertson, 1867); Man and Superman (Shaw, 1903); A Man of Honour (Maugham, 1898); The Hypocrites (Jones, 1906); Just to Get Married (Hamilton, 1910); Rutherford and Son (Sowerby, 1912).

155. The Observer, 26 May 1912, H.C. Vol.I. See also p.239 supra.

The plot is, briefly, about Leonard Timbrell, the youngest son, a weak and superficially clever young man forced to marry, by his father, the maid whom he has seduced and made pregnant. On the death of the baby, Mary, the maid, flaunts convention and eventually leaves her husband to join the man she originally intended to marry.<sup>(156)</sup> Mary compares with Fanny; Leonard with Alan; the Timbrells with the Jeffcotes, and the Broomes with the Hawthorns. This play's ending is in fact remarkably similar to the ending devised by Brighthouse in his novel version of Hindle Wakes (1927). In the play Mary is not the tower of strength that Fanny is, although she certainly tries, in her own clumsy ways, to state her mind. In fact, she almost represents what may well have become of Fanny had she submitted to the parental pressures for a marriage. Compare the following words of Mary's with those of Fanny's in The Works, Vol.2, pp.172-176:

Mary: *It was all wrong from the beginning. I brought it on myself .... It can't be right, but it's not so wrong as other things .... I want to be sure of things. I want things to last .... It's funny that I'm leaving you because I want to be a proper wife .... It's hard for a girl like me, not very clever, to make out things .... I may be wrong, but I can't help it.* (pp.289-290)

The Observer liked the presentation of Mary who by Act 4 had emerged from the background and was "suddenly pushed forward to reveal the only sense and force shown by anyone in the play".<sup>(157)</sup> Edward Garnett<sup>(158)</sup> saw this play as a particularly good example of Monkhouse's ability to show "the characters' analytic exposure of one another's motives through the duel of wits on the stage, in stripping away illusions". (ibid. p.1096). This was, I maintain, also true of

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156. Plays of Today, 2<sup>nd</sup> Volume, Sidgwick and Jackson, 1925, pp.215-292.

157. 26 May 1912, H.C. Vol.I.

158. 'The Work of Allan Monkhouse' in The Adelphi, Dec.1924, pp.1092-1101. See p.136 supra.

Houghton. Much more relevant is Garnett's view that Monkhouse,

*by exposing all the motives and the workings of the minds of this little group of people ... has ripped open most dexterously the stuffing of the bourgeois ideal and contrasted it with the simpler, more direct working-class morality. (p.1097)*

Such a contrast was highlighted by Houghton in the aforementioned article on dialect plays (p.271). If one also recollects Houghton's letter to Monkhouse on the subject (p.138) one can now realise that there was a profound difference between the two plays: Mary Broome was an ironic comedy dealing with class morality in general; it had a point of view - the reason for its creation. Houghton put it as follows:

*we are concerned in this comedy, [Mary Broome] as in all comedies doubtless, with the author's view of life; comedy must be a criticism from some point of view .... [and] the general impression one gets is that you have a burning scorn for most of the persons you have chosen to put on the stage .... Your treatment is comedy and mine [in Hindle Wakes] is an attempt at simple realistic drama. (159)*

The plot outline of The Last of the De Mullins has been given earlier (see p.244). Along with Hindle Wakes it differs from those Edwardian plays about duty in which the older generations with their conventional ideas of behaviour were presented to the younger generation as paradigms. In those cases where the young accepted those conventions the result was sorrowful; they became victims of duty. Fanny, in Hindle Wakes, never became a victim. Like Hankin, Houghton merits the view that he was

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159. Letter of 15 Oct.1911 to Monkhouse, A N M 12. See p.239 supra for more information on Houghton's definition of "simple realistic drama"; a transcript from life.

*a distinctive voice in the drama of his time, not usually understood and appreciated .... His drama was unconventional by the standards of his day ... both in its inclusion of tragic motifs in comedies and in its rejection of many Victorian values. (160)*

Something similar was also seen in another unpublished piece of research in 1928: here the writer noted that both Houghton and Hankin had *"failed to take a prominent place in the development of our drama"* simply because of their relatively smaller output. (161)

This writer also saw Janet, a true Ibsenite woman, as *"strong, frank and courageous yet with Shaw's additional conception of the 'Life Force'".* (p.117) She then cited Drinkwater who said that Hankin sought to tear away the mask that hid reality - an objective, one recalls, of Houghton's. In Hindle Wakes she saw Houghton's *"intense sympathy with those who have incurred the world's scorn and condemnation"*. (p.118) However, it was not the pity of a *"righteous man"*, but rather a display of a fine perception of feeling and an understanding of motives which *"set him apart from such as Pinero"*. In place of the artificiality and staginess of the earlier age one found in Houghton *"a truth to life and honesty of purpose"*. (ibid.) James Agate saw The Last of the De Mullins as an example of the type of *"brilliant work of the theatre that a later dramatist was afterwards to build on"*. That dramatist he named as Stanley Houghton. (162)

He agreed that there did exist a similarity of theme between the plays and eventually preferred Hankin's as the better portrayal. Professor

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160. W.H. Phillips, 'St. John Hankin and the drama of the Stage Society and the Court Theatre', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, op.cit. p.178.

161. V.T. Jones, 'Modern British Drama in relation to the plays of Ibsen', unpublished M.A. thesis. University of Liverpool, 1928, p.117.

162. Alarums and Excursions, Grant Richards, 1922, p.99.

A.E. Morgan, Principal of Sheffield University and Chairman of Sheffield Repertory Theatre<sup>(163)</sup> also noted the thematic connections but

*by reason of the dramatic prominence which he gave to the problem in his play and the manner in which it was handled, Houghton may rightly be regarded as original in his treatment of the question.* (164)

The Eldest Son proved to be a contentious issue in private between Houghton and Galsworthy. Not long after Hindle Wakes had gone into print Houghton, presumably at the request of Galsworthy, sent him a copy:

*Dear Mr. Houghton, It was good of you to send me 'Hindle Wakes' and I have read it with much interest. I thought the 1st Act very good - after that I think - bluntly - that your characters talk too much, and feel too little; and that your situation has perverted some of your psychology. I hope it will be very successful.* (165)

So far the letter was no more than would be expected since it is, obviously, in keeping with Galsworthy's view on dramatic style. For example, Bill Cheshire, the eldest son of the play's title, is to inherit his father's position as a country squire. He is expected to make a marriage in keeping with his position but has an affair with his mother's maid Freda who subsequently becomes pregnant. However, it is Freda who voluntarily releases Bill but, as J.W. Cunliffe rightly points out, she "makes her renunciation almost passively through the mouth of her father".<sup>(166)</sup> Galsworthy certainly held the

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163. Donald Wolfit, First Interval, Odhams, 1954, p.121.

164. Tendencies of Modern English Drama, Constable, 1924, p.181.

165. H.V. Marrot, The Life and Letters of John Galsworthy, Heinemann, 1935, p.354, dated 4 Aug.1912.

166. Modern English Playwrights : a short history of the English Drama from 1825, Harper, 1927, p.158.



individual up against society, showing how its rules affected those who were not average, but it was no more than a pity for the unfortunate victims; no condemnation was offered. A critic of The Manchester Guardian put it succinctly: "*There never was a reformer without a panacea, and Mr. Galsworthy has none*".<sup>(167)</sup>

The second half of Galsworthy's letter can now be quoted:

*I am afraid that when my play 'The Eldest Son' is at last produced, as it should be this autumn,<sup>(168)</sup> there will be a certain amount of comment on the similarity (not of plot and character but) of situation and the philosophy underlying it. If there is, I shall have to tell the Press that 'The Eldest Son' was conceived in 1906, written in February and March 1909, and delivered complete to Charles Frohman for his repertory scheme in June of that year. The circumstances that have held it back are not worth mentioning. Coincidences in plays are not difficult to avoid, I know, but in this particular case I should say the garrulity of the Press would require checking. With good wishes.  
Yours sincerely, John Galsworthy.*

One does sympathise with Galsworthy's fears which, in the event, turned out to be correct: "*the play suffered as Galsworthy feared it might, by its similarity to 'Hindle Wakes'*".<sup>(169)</sup> However, the imputation that Houghton's would be the inferior play was also proved wrong. For example, The Manchester Guardian noted that "*it is [the] continual homethrusting of 'The Eldest Son' that is so exasperating, and so foreign to the spirit of 'Hindle Wakes'*";<sup>(170)</sup> or perhaps with a wider perspective one cannot better Ada Galsworthy's own diary entry:

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167. Undated clipping in Manchester Central Reference Library, Theatre Collection, Scrapbook No.7. Ref. Sc.1.

168. i.e. 23 Nov.1912: see Catherine Dupré, John Galsworthy : a biography, Collins, 1976, p.200.

169. *ibid.*

170. The undated clipping: see fn.167.

"Fairly good success d'estime, and the usual commercial failure".<sup>(171)</sup>

Houghton's own private view is perhaps the most apposite. He told

Monkhouse:

... I saw "The Eldest Son" last night<sup>(172)</sup> .... An awful house; a poor play; dead silence after Acts 1 & 2. The third bucks up considerably; it is quite good, but only half there, as it were. He seems to have a genius for selecting the wrong scenes to illustrate his meaning. And Acts 1 & 2 are simply incompetent. There is no other word for it. When I think of "Mary Broome" & then of these crudities, I am appalled. Of course it is far more like "Mary Broome" than "Hindle". I can't see now why Freda doesn't marry Bill; or if she were going to refuse why she didn't refuse at once & spare us the play. But her refusal in the last act, for no reason at all, seems to me rather foolish. It was poorly acted, on the whole. Very amateurish, somehow.<sup>(173)</sup>

This letter speaks for itself and is a neat riposte to Galsworthy's opening paragraph to Houghton above.

In summary, then, it would seem that Houghton's initial contention that plays of similar theme should be written without any fear because of the opportunities available in characterization, was tenable. St. John Ervine, indeed, said so:

Houghton in 'Hindle Wakes', Mr. Galsworthy in 'The Eldest Son', and I in 'The Magnanimous Lover' [1912], each unaware of what the others were doing, used the same theme in remarkably dissimilar ways.<sup>(174)</sup>

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171. Catherine Dupré, op.cit. p.200.

172. i.e. 2 Dec.1912.

173. 3 Dec.1912, A N M 12.

174. St. John Ervine, How to write a play, Allen and Unwin, 1928, p.87.

11. The play : Manchester

On 28 October 1912 Hindle Wakes eventually arrived in Manchester.

The Gaiety programme of the previous week carried an orange coloured insert announcing its arrival: *"for two weeks with the original cast from The Playhouse and The Court Theatre, London".*<sup>(175)</sup> It was given special treatment by the Gaiety in that no curtain-raiser was scheduled with it and the starting time was set at 7.45 pm rather than at the usual 7.30 pm.<sup>(176)</sup> Houghton, as we have seen (see p.279), was very apprehensive about its reception in Manchester. With the public he need not have worried: *"A remarkable house welcomed [it] ... last night"* (Manchester Dispatch); *"a right royal welcome[with] ... constant signs of keen appreciation"* (Manchester Evening News); *"the Gaiety has been filled to overflowing at each performance"* (The Manchester Programme, 3 Nov); *"crowded to the doors"* (Daily Citizen). Several curtain calls brought Houghton on stage where he delivered *"a few unassuming remarks in response"* (ibid) and, *"modestly [speaking] his thanks and at the same time [he] paid a graceful compliment to the members of the company"* (Manchester Evening News).<sup>(177)</sup>

The Press was filled with the play for the two weeks with over thirty-eight separate articles written about it.<sup>(178)</sup> Many of the points raised were similar to those raised by the London critics: the play's well drawn characters, its wit, its realism and its skilled dialogue.

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175. Programme dated 21 Oct.1912, Manchester Central Reference Library, Theatre Collection, ref.Ma 427.

176. Poster, ibid.

177. All articles dated 29 Oct.1912 except the one indicated. Located H.C. Vol.J.

178. H.C. Vol.J.

The Manchester City News of all the press notices must have brought Houghton the greatest relief. It questioned whether London's acceptance of the play was totally valid since "*the supreme test had to be made in Manchester*". The article concluded that, "*Today Mr. Stanley Houghton should be a happy man ... we regard 'Hindle Wakes' as a masterly work*". (179)

In general, the Manchester Press was more reserved in its praise than the London Press, a point later acknowledged by Houghton during an interview:

*The Manchester critics were more reserved and candid about it than you were in London ... I am looked upon as a more or less trifling person by the intellectuals in Manchester, and I don't know that Manchester is not right - though of course, it is always pleasant to be praised.* (180)

One can detect, perhaps, some tongue-in-cheek here. Overall it proved to be an immensely successful play: "*new box-office records were set.*" (181) It was even on again at the Gaiety only a few weeks later, in December 1912. (182)

In October 1912 Miss Horniman's business Manager E.T. Heys resigned in order to control the touring of the play in the provinces. (183) In

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179. 2 Nov.1912, H.C. Vol.J.

180. Article entitled 'The High-Brow Play' in the Daily Chronicle 18 Nov.1912, p.5.

181. Introduction, p.1.

182. Pogson, p.204. For six nights from 16 Dec.

183. Reference has already been made to Heys (see p.209). Dr. Devlin provides more information: "*Lewis [Casson] was amazed to learn that she [Miss Horniman] had given the provincial rights of 'Hindle Wakes' to her faithful business-manager, Edwin Heys, as a wedding-gift - thereby losing both his services and the profits that were made*". (See A Speaking Part : Lewis Casson and the theatre of his time, op.cit. p.81).

See also The Pall Mall Gazette, 7 Oct.1912, H.C. Vol.J.

1913 no less than five companies were performing the play, "*breaking records at many theatres in Lancashire and Yorkshire*".<sup>(184)</sup> Heys seems to have held the rights of the play's provincial tours for some fifteen years.<sup>(185)</sup>

## 12. The play : America

The play's production in America . was eagerly awaited both by Houghton and the American public. The New York Evening Post, for example, reported that

*Brady<sup>(186)</sup> early in November, will present here the 'Hindle Wakes' of Stanley Houghton, a play that has caused some commotion on the other side of the Atlantic .... It tells the story of a girl, who, having surrendered herself in a moment of intoxication to a casual lover, refuses, after she has become a mother and provoked great scandal thereby, to marry the father.*<sup>(187)</sup>

This particular clipping is interesting for another reason besides its distorted plot summary: underneath it Miss Horniman has written the following comment:

*The play is over within two days after the escapade.  
American ideas & physique are beyond ours!*

Ironically the play was to suffer severely on its initial showing

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184. Introduction, p.1.

185. Letter to Houghton's executor, 7 July 1927, in Stanley Houghton Collection.

186. Renowned American theatre manager (1863-1950): see O.C.T., p.124.

187. 21 Sept.1912, H.C. Vol.I.

but not because of its potential scandal - rather the reverse. This point will be extended shortly. Meanwhile Houghton himself had every intention of being at its first American showing. (188) In a letter one finds that Houghton was very much behind the American initiative. He wrote to Miss Horniman that,

*I shall soon be in the throes of engaging a company here to go to America. Brady should open on December 1 at the 48 Street Theatre. Whom do you recommend to produce it? I suppose you wouldn't let Mr. Casson - not even if we sent the company to rehearse in Manchester? Who else? And can you suggest any actors? (189)*

Across the top of this letter is Miss Horniman's own writing: "Casson first name on programme". This would seem to suggest that she was in agreement but only because of Houghton's persuasion. Indeed, in an interview she gave to the Chicago Tribune at a later date she recollected that

*I agreed to allow my director Mr. Lewis Casson to go over and produce the play on two conditions. First that his name should appear on everything, and, second, that he be well paid. (190)*

Casson never did go over with the play, however, since he was too preoccupied at the Gaiety preparing for the Christmas productions. (191) Interestingly his rehearsing of the cast in this country for a production in another was unusual, if not rare, at the time. (192)

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188. He made this known in some of his letters, e.g. to Prof. Baker: 7 Aug. and 2 Oct. 1912 (see p. 269 for location); to Monkhouse: 26 Sept 1912, A N M 10.

189. 31 Aug. 1912, Cade Collection.

190. 29 June 1913, H.C. Vol. L.

191. See A Speaking Part : Lewis Casson and the theatre of his time, op.cit. Ch. 6.

192. Certainly for the Gaiety Company, as confirmed by Dr. Devlin (by telephone).

Whitford Kane, an American actor, recalled meeting the cast who "had been rehearsed in England".<sup>(193)</sup> However, the only established Gaiety actor in the cast was Herbert Lomas.<sup>(194)</sup> Nonetheless much capital was made of the fact that the cast had been rehearsed in London: The New York Times carried an advertisement announcing:

*The sensation of The London Season*  
*HINDLE WAKES with the ENGLISH CAST and PRODUCTION*  
*INTACT [8 Dec.1912]*

whilst the programme read:

*The company was organized and rehearsed in England*  
*by Lewis Casson, stage director of Miss Horniman's*  
*noted repertoire Company, of Manchester.*<sup>(195)</sup>

The play, it will be recalled, had been signed up by William A. Brady on 4 July 1912.<sup>(196)</sup> The contract was, however, to be breached, and apparently with impunity. Houghton never made it to America and

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193. In his autobiography, Are We All Met, Elkin Mathews and Marrot, 1931, p.136.
194. Cast given in The New York Times, 10 Dec.1912, p.15:  
Mrs. H : Alice O'Dea; C.H. : James C. Taylor; F.H. : Emelie Polini; Mrs. J : Alice Chapin; N.J. : Herbert Lomas;  
Ada : Kathleen MacPherson; A.J. : Roland Young; Sir A.F. : Charles F. Lloyd; B.F. : Dulcie Conry. A photograph of the production is to be found in Daniel Blum, A Pictorial History of the American Theatre 1860-1960, Bonanza Books, 1960, p.134. He notes: "1912 ... among the interesting events was the dramatization of ... 'Hindle Wakes' with Emelie Polini and Roland Young" (pp.131-2).
195. I am grateful to The New York Public Library (Performing Arts Research Center) Amsterdam Ave, for supplying a photocopy of the programme.
196. See p.218. Contract in the Stanley Houghton Collection.

the venue and date was different from that given in Houghton's letter. It opened at The Maxine Elliott Theatre (built 1908 - demolished 1960) New York on 9 December 1912 and only ran for thirty-two performances.<sup>(197)</sup> The New York Times was generally despondent. Its long headline summed it up:

*'Hindle Wakes' is rather somnolent. Conventional Story Well Told, but Very Poorly Acted by Imported Company. One or two exceptions. This Much-Praised Play from London Provides One of the Real Disappointments of the Season.* (198)

The critic saw it as "slow-moving in the extreme", and "rather tedious". He had little praise for the actors, including Lomas, whose performance was "competent" but "hardly more". On the face of it this review would at first seem to be puzzling: why should a play that had caused such a sensation in England fall so flat in America where at the time (1910-1939) many British plays were achieving various levels of success? An interesting study shows that between the two countries more than 500 plays by nearly three hundred playwrights crossed the Atlantic Ocean in both directions during that period.<sup>(199)</sup> Despite the fact that only a third of these plays ran for more than one hundred performances (being the writer's definition of 'success') certain features do emerge which seem to indicate the type of things American audiences liked from British plays - those that therefore succeeded. For example it liked individual heroes as opposed to groups; tea scenes were welcomed as was the ridiculing of class distinction and old customs. Hobson's Choice therefore succeeded

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197. J.M. Salem, A Guide to Critical Reviews : Part 3, op.cit. pp.125-6.

198. 10 Dec.1912, p.15.

199. A published Ph.D. thesis : Alice K. Boyd, The Interchange of Plays between London and New York 1910-1939, Columbia University, 1948, p.1.



with 135 performances (p.98). As Hindle Wakes also had these qualities it seems odd that it should 'fail'. The fact is that Houghton's original play was not the one the audiences saw: alterations were made to it once the cast arrived in New York and therefore not only was section seven of the contract contravened (which stated that *"no lines or scenes shall be introduced or 'cuts' or other alterations made"*) but also the play's potential was put in jeopardy. The New York Globe, five days after the opening was outraged at the alterations:

*'Hindle Wakes' has not caused the sensation it was expected to. How on earth a thing can be a sensation when its sensational points are cut out is a mystery.* (200)

It listed the changes as, *"the bowdlerization of the dialogue"*, and, *"the toning down of the last act"*, that is omissions which lessened the power of the daring stance taken by Fanny. Thus in the closing scenes she was not permitted to take any of the blame for the escapade, a change that the paper viewed satirically as *"idolatrous"* in that *"we must preserve at all costs the ... tradition that it is always the man who is to blame"*. Perhaps the most ludicrous alteration was the line which Alan speaks when asked by Beatrice why he did it: the original says: *"I don't know. It was her lips"*. (The Works, Vol.2, p.150), whereas the altered version says, *"I don't know. I think it was her eyes"*. The play was also divided into 4 acts instead of the original 3. The effective quick scene change in Act I (see p. 271 for a discussion about such an effect) was replaced by an intermission of six minutes followed by Act II. Intermission times in fact

totalled twenty-four minutes in three stages,<sup>(201)</sup> thereby interrupting continuity and perhaps destroying the illusion. Such changes necessarily altered the play's overall quality: they made *"quite a difference in the forcefulness of the scene, the character of the girl and the significance of the play as a whole"*.<sup>(202)</sup> The changes (*"this fig-leaf"*) were ordered by Brady according to the above critic, and he maintains Brady actually boasted about them. Whitford Kane alluded to this very issue when he said that he was told by the cast that the play *"had been changed and Houghton's fine script badly tampered with"*.<sup>(203)</sup>

The real test would of course lie in the presentation of the play in its original form but before another audience. Indeed, Brady must have been quick to realise his mistake. He not only offered Whitford Kane a contract to appear in it in Chicago,<sup>(204)</sup> but more importantly allowed Lomas to direct it. Of paramount importance was that *"all the alterations of the author's work, which had proven so disastrous in New York, were removed and we played directly from Houghton's own script"*.<sup>(205)</sup> Whitford Kane (1881-1956) had been a member of the Horniman Company and also of the Liverpool Repertory Theatre prior to going to America. He had already played in Houghton's Independent Means, The Master of the House, The Younger Generation, and was later

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201. I have used the above programme of the play for this information See fn.195.

202. The New York Globe, op.cit.

203. Are We All Met, op.cit. p.136.

204. *ibid.* p.142.

205. *ibid.* p.147.

to appear in Phipps.<sup>(206)</sup> Lomas (1887-1961) was the original Nat Jeffcote<sup>(207)</sup> and was considered "*the best Lancashire actor of his time*".<sup>(208)</sup> He had been the leading actor at the Liverpool Repertory Theatre for five years.<sup>(209)</sup> J.C. Trewin recalled his acting but particularly his "*powerful voice [which] had always ... in it the wind of the Pennines and the clacking looms*".<sup>(210)</sup> The play was to be sponsored by the Chicago Theatre Society, a local organisation designed to support drama. Its chief aim was "*to maintain a high standard in the excellence of production*".<sup>(211)</sup> This organisation was the one that Iden Payne eventually took over. It was to run Hindle Wakes for a guaranteed three weeks.

With such support and expertise and the original script the play could hardly fail. It opened at the Fine Arts Theatre (later The Playhouse) on 4 February 1913,<sup>(212)</sup> and was "*an instant success*", playing to "*crowded houses*"; indeed "*the critics hailed us*".<sup>(213)</sup> As such the

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206. Kane was the original Will Mossop in Hobson's Choice (see What I have had, op.cit. p.64), a play Kane maintains was written for him (see Are We All Met, op.cit. p.179). He was also the one who persuaded Iden Payne to work in America (ibid. p.153). He acted in Hindle Wakes again in 1922 (see Who Was Who in the Theatre 1912-76, Vol.3, op.cit. p.1325).
207. The Works, Vol.3, p.309.
208. What I have had, op.cit. p.57. Lomas told the Chicago Evening Post (19 Feb. 1913, p.2) "*After I became a member of the Manchester Company I never tried to get away*".
209. What I have had, op.cit. p.57.
210. The Edwardian Theatre, Blackwell, 1976, p.104. Trewin also saw the 1949 revival of Hindle Wakes with Lomas as Nat. (ibid.)
211. Are We All Met, op.cit. p.145.
212. ibid. p.147.
213. ibid.

play ran for longer than originally planned, (for about eight weeks in total),<sup>(214)</sup> and was later transferred to the larger Olympic Theatre. There the theatre was adorned with sheaves of oats and posters reading,

*Chicagoans, come and see the little girl that sows  
her wild oats.* (215)

From there the play toured in Indianapolis and Cincinnati. Later, in 1913, it opened in Philadelphia where, despite it being "a more proper town than Chicago" it did "exceptionally well".<sup>(216)</sup>

Finally, I would like to return to A.K. Boyd's research (fn.199) which concluded that Hindle Wakes played "without success" in America (in that it had less than one hundred successive showings following its opening performance). She did not include in her figures all the above productions<sup>(217)</sup> nor did she realise the changes that had been made by Brady and their consequent effect. Therefore her contention needs to be modified. As in England Hindle Wakes (apart from its New York production) was a success. Indeed Houghton's reputation as a playwright in America was established by its success:

*We [the U.S.A.] commandeered our dramatic renaissance  
bodily from abroad .... From Ireland, Scandinavia,  
Russia, Germany, England ... Bernard Shaw, Barker,  
Houghton, Galsworthy.* (218)

And more precisely:

*the basis of choice has been excellence of workmanship  
... [as seen in] 'Hindle Wakes'.* (219)

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214. Deductions made from an article in the Chicago Tribune, 23 March 1913, p.11.

215. Are We All Met, op.cit. p.150.

216. ibid. p.167.

217. See The Interchange of Plays between London and New York, op.cit. p.92.

218. O.M. Sayler, Our American Theatre, Blom, 1923 (1971 Reissue) pp.11-12

219. ibid. pp.287-294.

13. The play : contemporary issues in it

Of all the issues raised by the play, both here and in America, two were paramount: its morality and its relationship to Women's Suffrage. The former was profound, particularly when the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University imposed a ban on it for all students. The play was due to be performed at the New Theatre, Oxford, on 25 November 1912. (220) Miss Horniman's reaction was typical of her:

*The Vice-Chancellor is loyal to the passing tradition that the Lords of Creation are to be allowed a lower morality than the unenfranchised helots .... He will not allow the undergraduates to hear the horrible fact that it is as reprehensible for them to go on a gay week-end as for the women from Newnham and Girton. (221)*

Moreover,

*as a London suburban, dissenting, middle-class, middle-aged spinster, I am not annoyed. I am amused .... It would be most unreasonable to demand that a man with such a position should know anything of workaday life.*

Houghton also held a similar viewpoint, both privately and publicly.

To Monkhouse he wrote:

*I hear that the Vice-Chancellor has banned Hindle at Oxford. A good subject for a leader, (222)*

and to the Press he announced that

*directly the Vice-Chancellor's action was known there was an instant rush for seats [and] it was sold out for the rest of the run. (223)*

A writer of the time helps to put the ban into perspective: he wrote

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220. Interview given by Miss Horniman to the Manchester Evening Chronicle, 6 Nov.1912, H.C. Vol.J.

221. It is interesting to note her choice of two well-known female colleges at Cambridge.

222. 6 Nov.1912, A N M 10.

223. Daily Chronicle, 18 Nov.1912, p.5. See also Pogson, p.203.

that, "Oxford ... was at that time actively dissociating itself from the intellectual and artistic ambitions of the English theatre." (224)

Another writer, some years later, (but in connection with this particular ban) recalled that

*as late as 1923 the authorities of my own college at Oxford refused to allow the college dramatic society to produce 'Androcles and the Lion' on the grounds that it was blasphemous ....* (225)

The central moral issue was the relationship between the two women and Alan, and the whereabouts of 'the baby'. The Westminster Gazette complained that "*the psychology of the girl is quite unconvincing, and the motives of her refusal remain obscure*" (13 June). The Referee complained of the "*unnaturalness*" of allowing Alan the opportunity to discuss "*so unreservedly with the young lady he is engaged to marry the details of his adventure with the daughter of a millhand*" since such a discussion "*must inevitably tend to the degradation of public manners*". (21 July). Miss Horniman had an answer to that particular charge: "*Just because the decent folks in 'Hindle Wakes' take life seriously ... [others] appear surprised to hear the facts of real life spoken on the stage in the way in which they are referred to in normal households*". (The Pall Mall Gazette, 9 August). (226) Vanity Fair carried a quotation which it claimed originated from a West Country local paper: "*we should have preferred that this incident ["the weekend escapade"] had been kept within the confines of the County Palatine, instead of sending it into a part of England where we live in an atmosphere of more purity*", (23 September). (227) Indeed, the

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- 224. John Palmer, The Future of the Theatre, Bell and Sons, 1913, p.36.
  - 225. Norman Marshall, The Other Theatre, Lehmann, 1948 (2<sup>nd</sup> Impression) p.18.
  - 226. All comments are from 1912, H.C. Vol.I.
  - 227. H.C. Vol.L. (1913)

general public entered the debate through the letters' columns, particularly of the Pall Mall Gazette<sup>(228)</sup> and The Manchester Guardian. One writer noted that the play had, "*produced in me the sensation as if someone had spat in my face*". Another commented that "*the cool way in which possible maternity is kept out of sight is sufficient to render the play useless*", particularly when, as he added, that he had just "*received an appeal from a society which states that 50,000 children were casually born in that way last year*". To this particular charge Houghton was drawn. From his holiday hotel in Criccieth, on 10 August 1912, he wrote a letter to the Editor of the Pall Mall Gazette (printed 12 Aug) in response to "*Another Playgoer*",

*who presumes that my aim in writing 'Hindle Wakes' was to express the point of view "that women may enter on promiscuous relations on the lowest basis before marriage, and that such relations need count as nothing at all in her life". May I say that nothing so portentous was in my mind. My aim was not to express any "point of view" whatever, but to present life as I saw it. I do not think that it is the business of a playwright to subject his audience to moral or philosophical exercises. 'Hindle Wakes', at least, was designed purely as entertainment.*

*Your correspondent adds that "the cool way in which possible maternity is kept out of sight renders the play worthless". The point is a difficult one to deal with in a play, and it is hardly less difficult here; but I may remind your innocent correspondent that possible maternity is frequently kept out of sight in a very cool way indeed. (229)*

In another letter to an unidentified critic, Houghton took up the point of Fanny's moral attitude. He was pleased that this particular person

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228. Pogson, pp.129 ff quotes parts of some.

229. H.C. Vol.I.

*didn't find Fanny wrong in her attitude in the last act. To me that is the real point of the play, and I cannot understand [some critics] finding her behaviour untrue. There must be millions of such women, and a few who have the strength of mind to take the line Fanny took .... I could understand fault being found with the Beatrice and Alan scene in the second act; not with Beatrice's attitude, which is sound, but with the writing, which ought to be charged with more passion than I have been able to get into it. (230)*

Related to this is the view expressed by the Church Times:

*as regards its morality ... I think that the castigations are undeserved .*

This critic, however, saw a failure on Houghton's part: not succeeding with his ironic method of showing

*how hideous the man-of-world's defence of immorality sounds when it is transferred to the mouth of a woman. (231)*

Other than that the critic highly praised the play.

Houghton's viewpoints here are very interesting, particularly when related to the play: the result was (as Houghton always maintained) no more than a representation of life as he saw it. Such a representation was indeed contemporary. Samuel Hynes, for example, shows that research into the nature of sex was "*Edwardian England's principal contribution to modern psychology*".<sup>(232)</sup> Thus Havelock Ellis's study, Man and Woman (Walter Scott, 1894), by 1914 had not only reached its fifth edition but had "*succeeded for the first time in*

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230. See fn.10 supra for the location of the letter.

231. 16 Aug.1912, H.C. Vol.I.

232. The Edwardian Turn of Mind, op.cit. p.148. See also pp.158-59



*explaining objectively and intelligently to non-specialist English readers how and why the sexes differed, yet also how they were equal".* His influence was widespread: *"the subject of sex was now being acknowledged to exist, at least in print and among thinking people".*<sup>(233)</sup> Sexual behaviour was now shown to be instinctual as well as moral. Such a belief was of course fundamental to Fanny's argument in Hindle Wakes. Enquiries argued that judgments of sexual behaviour should be based on natural and humane considerations rather than on social conventions - a main feature of the play.

The principal effect of such enquiries lay not in the science of psychology but in the modification of the attitudes of the informed lay public - of whom Houghton must surely be considered a member. By 1913, for example, Ethel Snowden (wife of a Labour politician) was able to publish her book The Feminist Movement (Collins) in which she demanded the endorsement of one code of sexual conduct applicable equally to men and women.<sup>(234)</sup> The established Edwardian attitude, according to Hynes, that *"sex was essentially a social problem involving behaviour that was subject to rational choice and control and could properly be made subject to the prescriptions of law"* was in fact *"antithetical to what [was] called the 'New Spirit' which would liberate individual sexual feelings from social definitions."* (p.171). The conflict that existed between these two opposing views, according to Hynes, continued through the Edwardian period with

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233. Donald Read, England 1868-1914, op.cit. p.501.

234. *ibid.*

increasing intensity. As such the reactions to Hindle Wakes above were to be expected: *"no aspect of human life changed more in the transition from Victorian England to modern England than the way Englishmen thought about sex"* (Hynes, p.171). The fact that one critic believes that Houghton did *"vital work in bringing changed sexual standards to the attention of the slow-moving compact majority"*<sup>(235)</sup> is therefore important.

Houghton never set out to be either an Ibsen or a Shaw, but rather to present in drama just what he saw. This is interesting since other contemporary playwrights were hesitant to write plays about the above issues because of the censorship laws. In 1909 Henry James believed that censorship of drama kept *"most serious writers ... away from the 'unholy trade' whilst Arnold Bennett believed they made it 'impossible ... to even think of writing plays on the same plane of realism and thoroughness as my novels"*. James Barrie believed that the laws made *"our drama a more puerile thing in the life of the nation than it ought to be and [was] a stigma on all who write plays"*. As a summary, Granville-Barker maintained that censorship forced a writer to choose either to write *"purely conventional plays, which he practically knows the Lord Chamberlain will not object to, or he must take to some other form of literary work, such as book-writing - the writing of fiction - where he is not hampered by any such dictation"*.<sup>(236)</sup> Houghton's ability to handle such issues in Hindle Wakes and not be

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235. Anita Block, The Changing World of Plays and the Theatre, Da Capo Press, 1971, p.132 (first pub.1939).

236. All these views are to be found in R. Findlater, Banned, op.cit. pp.77, 106, 107 respectively.

censored in any way shows him as having achieved, perhaps, an enviable approach. His handling of the double standard in sexual relationships (that is the code which demanded complete chastity on the part of all members of the female sex who expected to be married but which permitted the male *"to roam at will in the theory that woman is by nature asexual and 'pure'"*)<sup>(237)</sup> was particularly successful. Block sees Fanny as a good example of the woman who could revolt against such a standard because the industrial evolution permitted an economic emancipation. Houghton, she believes was not only *"thoroughly integrated with his own time"* but also understood fully *"its social and economic defects"*. (p.79).

One novel, however, did attempt to study the above problems: Ann Veronica (1909) by H.G. Wells. What makes that novel particularly interesting is the fact that its heroine has striking similarities with the heroine of Houghton's own unfinished novel Life (see Ch.11); she also bears comparison with Fanny Hawthorn. As mentioned earlier (p.133) Houghton liked and read Wells and therefore must have known the novel. Briefly, Ann Veronica tells the story of a girl who fights against convention: she does not want marriage, despite the presence of a respectable suitor and her domineering father's commands. She leaves home, has an affair at her own instigation with a married man on holiday and becomes pregnant. Macmillan turned the book down for publication because of its outspoken attitude.<sup>(238)</sup> It was only the perseverance of Unwin that got it published eventually - the very

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237. Anita Block, op.cit. pp.78-79.

238. Lovat Dickson, H.G. Wells : his turbulent life and times, Macmillan, 1969, p.166.

publisher who was later to commission Houghton to write his novel (see p.384). Like Fanny, Ann was a determined feminist, ready, willing and able to defend her individuality. Compare, for example, some typical extracts from the novel with sections of Hindle Wakes:

*"Her[Ann's] ideas of ... a modern women's pose in life were based largely on the figure of Vivie Warren in 'Mrs. Warren's Profession', furtively [seen] ... from the gallery of a Stage Society performance one Monday afternoon ... the figure of Vivien, hard, capable, successful ... appealed to her. She saw herself in very much Vivie's position - managing something";*

or,

*"Women are mocked", she said. "Whenever they try to take hold of life a man intervenes";*

or,

*"a woman wants a proper alliance with a man, a man who is better stuff than herself .... She wants to be legally and economically free, so as not to be subject to the wrong man". (239)*

This freedom was essentially the freedom from pregnancy. As Hynes says

*a woman who could choose not to bear children was liberated from one of the strongest bonds that held her subordinate to men; she became at once both independent and mobile. (240)*

This may well explain Fanny's ability (unlike Ann who eventually does become pregnant) not only to accept Alan's offer of spending the week-end with him but also to pursue her own mind to the end. She knew that the only possible weak link in her defence was not there: she

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239. Ann Veronica, Fisher Unwin, 1925, pp.108-9, 237, 274 respectively. Compare with The Works, Vol.2, pp.170-176.

240. op.cit. p.200.

had taken precautions against pregnancy. This was undoubtedly Houghton's master-stroke and yet one he could never openly admit. One has only to recall his answer to the charge of *"the cool way in which possible maternity is kept out of sight"* (see p.218). He answered: *"the point is a difficult one to deal with in a play, and it is hardly less difficult here [in a correspondence column]"*. Notably he added: *"May I remind your innocent correspondent that possible maternity is frequently kept out of sight in a very cool way indeed"*. As the birth rate was falling throughout this period<sup>(241)</sup> he must surely have meant contraception.

The role of Suffrage in Hindle Wakes was not intentionally political. Its presence was really a reflection of the times. The determination of Fanny just happened to be characteristic of the movement. Houghton must have been acutely aware of the whole movement, not least because of the sympathy shown to them by C.P. Scott and The Manchester Guardian<sup>(242)</sup>, and Miss Horniman's active participation in their peaceful meetings.<sup>(243)</sup> Also some of the actors, actresses and managers whom Houghton knew and was friendly with were also members of the 'Actresses' Franchise League': J. Forbes-Robertson and his wife Gertrude Elliot; the Vanbrugh sisters; Lewis Casson; Sybil Thorndike.<sup>(244)</sup> The movement was indeed quick to see in Hindle Wakes an excellent cry:

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241. R.C.K. Ensor, England 1870-1914, O U P, 1936, p.499 shows births per 1,000 as: 1900 = 28.2; 1905 = 26.9; 1910 = 25; 1911 = 24.4; 1912 = 24; 1913 = 23.9. Hynes, op.cit. p.197 estimates a 30% decline between 1870-1910.

242. David Mitchell, Queen Christabel : a biography of Christabel Pankhurst, Macdonald and Jane's, 1977, p.240.

243. Many clippings from H.C. testify to this.

244. David Mitchell, op.cit. p.136.

*All Suffragists should see the play 'Hindle Wakes' .... [which shows] the man's relation to the woman with whom he has sinned ... [because] the various points of view from which his lapse is regarded, and the different judgment passed upon the woman from that meted out to him, are powerfully handled. (245)*

Another suffragist, however, writing to The Manchester Guardian complained that the denouement was all wrong despite Fanny's stand:

*Alan remains triumphant and confident of the forgiveness of the poor girl he pretends to love, and the curtain falls on a comfortable and satisfactory settlement for all .... the plutocratic household. (246)*

Reference has already been made to the demonstration in front of Lloyd George whilst watching the play (see p.259).

The Suffrage Movement, and therefore the play, was only part of a larger, more complex movement in the Edwardian period: that "vast change that took place in the relations between the sexes and ... the place of women in English Society in the years before the War". (247) It was a social revolution involving all areas of life: sexual, legal, political, economical, property ownership, education, divorce and marriage. Though little was achieved before the War, one major area had been influenced - people's attitudes:

*By the end of Edward's reign many thoughtful people had come to believe that the institutional forms of man-woman relations in England were outmoded and unjust. (248)*

Houghton helped bring their nature into the open.

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245. The Vote, 3 Aug.1912, H.C. Vol.I.

246. 5 Nov.1912, H.C. Vol.J.

247. Hynes, op.cit. p.172.

248. ibid. p.173.

Hindle Wakes had curiously hit upon two of the most important aspects of contemporary life which were perhaps best summed up by one of the Suffragettes' mottos:

*Votes for Women and Chastity for men.* (249)

J.T. Grein (1862-1935), the critic who "did much to further the production of the 'new plays of ideas'" (250) said of Houghton and the play:

*It is inevitable that one day the sexual position of the woman will become as acute a question as that of her political rights. Therefore, it is well that the way should be paved, and such a play as 'Hindle Wakes' is of greater value because it forces the heart to give earnest thought to that which in our community is always suppressed under the shield of tradition, convention and even education.* (251)

It would be pertinent to end this section with a quotation from Ann Veronica. The heroine initially was a Suffragette but left the movement because she was not hostile to men. Like Fanny Hawthorn she wanted

*a proper alliance with a man, a man who is better stuff than herself. She wants that and needs it more than anything else in the world. It may not be just, it may not be fair, but things are so. It isn't law, nor custom, nor masculine violence settled that. It is just how things happen to be. She wants to be free - she wants to be legally and economically free, so as not to be subject to the wrong man.* (p.274)

Given that one now has all the above information it is perhaps not surprising that Houghton, as I mentioned earlier (p.238), was able to write the "full scheme of 'Hindle Wakes' ... on a few scattered papers of a penny notebook." (252) This, however, in no way undermines the play's skill.

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249. Quoted by Hynes, p.201.

250. O.C.T., p.412.

251. Cameos of Playwrights and Players 1914-21, op.cit. p.6.

252. Introduction, p.xxxix.

14. The play : further productions (including radio and television)

The play continued to be a success. It returned to the Gaiety within a few weeks of its October showing, <sup>(253)</sup> again in September 1913, and perhaps sadly within four days of his death, the programme for that occasion being lined in black. <sup>(254)</sup> By 1914 The Manchester Guardian was able to record that the published plays of Ibsen, Strindberg, Houghton, Hankin and Yeats "*sell by the thousand*". <sup>(255)</sup> In April and November 1915 it was again at the Gaiety and in 1920 was the final play to be staged there prior to the theatre's closure, along with The Dear Departed. <sup>(256)</sup> The Court Theatre re-staged it in 1913. <sup>(257)</sup> Indeed, by the middle of that year some 2,000 performances of the play had been seen in London, Manchester and America. <sup>(258)</sup> In 1914 a contract was signed to allow the play's production in South Africa (with the African Theatres' Trust Ltd). This was made possible by the contract held by Miss Horniman. <sup>(259)</sup> In September 1915 it was played

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253. Pogson, p.204.

254. Programme of 15 Dec.1913. Manchester Central Reference Library Theatre Collection.

255. 28 May, H.C. Vol.N.

256. Manchester Gaiety and Midland Theatre Programmes, Vol.V. Manchester Central Reference Library Theatre Collection, Ref. Ma.166.

257. The Westminster Gazette, 23 Sept. H.C. Vol.L. There are some 25 clippings on this production in H.C. Vol.O.

258. S.J. Kunitz and H. Haycroft, (Eds), Twentieth Century Authors: a biographical Dictionary of Modern Literature, Wilson, 1942, p.669.

259. Contract in the Stanley Houghton Collection. Miss Horniman got 30% of the proceeds; Houghton's father got 60%; and the agent (I.C.B.) got 10%. Miss Horniman had friends in South Africa connected with her interest in the occult (information supplied by Dr. Cogdill of New York). See for example her design for the Gaiety Theatre emblem. The above company in South Africa also took The Hillarys in 1915 (see p.194).



at the Duke of York's Theatre where it received a very warm reception.<sup>(260)</sup>  
In 1916 a contract enabled it to be taken to India where realistic  
drama was just establishing itself.<sup>(261)</sup> By 1917 the play's total  
performances had reached in excess of 3,500.<sup>(262)</sup> In 1924 (Sir)  
Donald Wolfit, who married Iden Payne's daughter, played Sir Timothy  
Farrar in a production in Manchester<sup>(263)</sup>. In March 1928 the  
Manchester Athenaeum Dramatic Society (Houghton's old club) staged it  
for the first time.<sup>(264)</sup> 1927 saw Samuel French take out the  
professional rights of the play for five years at £100 per annum.<sup>(265)</sup>

During the 1949 revival in London, J.C. Trewin recalled how, during  
the intervals

*seasoned playgoers were discussing Houghton's plot and  
purpose with almost ingenuous enthusiasm. The theatre  
flared into debate. An uninstructed visitor might  
have surely thought that here was one of the jewels of  
contemporary drama .... It was, in effect, another  
triumphant premiere for Houghton.* <sup>(266)</sup>

Pogson in fact offered a similar comment for the same period:

*the general feeling was that, if it could not be classed  
as a great play, it was a much better one than had been  
thought in the intervening <sup>years</sup> years.* (op.cit. p.133).

Financially it had always been considered outstanding: "*the biggest  
money spinner that the repertory movement has yet produced*".<sup>(267)</sup>

The Star, the day Houghton died, actually put a figure on it:

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260. See H.C. Vol.N. which has some 60 articles connected with that  
theatre's production.
261. O.C.T. p.469. Contract in the Stanley Houghton Collection.
262. Harold Brighouse, The Manchester Drama, Sherratt and Hughes,  
1917, p.86.
263. First Interval, op.cit. p.113.
264. Programme of 16 and 17 March 1928 in Blanton Collection.
265. Contract in the Stanley Houghton Collection.
266. The Theatre Since 1900, Andrew Dakers Ltd, 1951, p.99.
267. Manchester Evening News, 28 June 1913, H.C. Vol.L.

£100,000 (£2,600,000 in 1981). Fortunately this gross exaggeration has been corrected. Next to the above article Miss Horniman wrote: *"Lie. about £4,000 [£104,000 in 1981] at most"*.<sup>(268)</sup>

The most recent professional productions have been at the Octagon Theatre, Bolton, in 1972, 1978 and 1982.<sup>(269)</sup> The first was to mark the play's diamond jubilee. Of the second the Financial Times remarked that *"the piece may have dated, but not irrevocably"*,<sup>(270)</sup> whilst the latter production caused one critic to note that the play was *"still a shocker"* because *"so many of the same prejudices and attitudes are still with us today [including] the double standard"* albeit *"a little more discreetly these days."*<sup>(271)</sup>

The B.B.C. broadcast the play on radio eleven times between 1945-74,<sup>(272)</sup> and five times on television between 1947-57.<sup>(273)</sup> The I.B.A. televised it twice in 1958.<sup>(274)</sup> Perhaps its greatest accolade was received from (Lord) Laurence Olivier who, in 1976, chose and directed it for

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268. 11 Dec.1913, H.C. Vol.L.

269. See Ch.7. fn.118 for an interesting comment on the Lord Chamberlain's instructions to this theatre to obtain a licence in 1972 for this play's 'first production'.

270. 3 July 1978, p.8.

271. Worseley Journal, 18 March 1982, p.6.

272. B.B.C. Archives, London (Programme Correspondence Section): 8.12.45; 6.4.47; 8.7.47; 15.12.48; 7.2.49; 4.10.51; 22.5.65; 24.5.65; 11.1.69; 13.1.69; 26.8.74.

273. *ibid.* 6.7.47; 8.7.47; 1.1.50; 5.11.52; 6.6.57.

274. I.B.A. London; 5.7.58 (ATV); 12.9.58 (Act 3 only).

Granada Television as the opening play in a series entitled 'The Best Play of the Year'. It was Olivier's first television directing role.<sup>(275)</sup> The cast was impressive: Donald Pleasence; Rosalind Ayres; Jack Hedley; Roy Dotrice; Trevor Eve (R.A.D.A. Gold Medallist). The press liked it: *"it was presented straight; its humour incidental and almost shy, so that the bygone sexual attitudes and double standards filled the foreground"*, (Daily Mail); Fanny was seen as *"the pioneer Women's Libber"* (ibid.); *"A brilliant production .... It still stands up ... and Olivier saw to it that it was"*, (Daily Express); *"probably the best period piece of 1976"*, (Daily Telegraph); The Times, however, whilst praising the play's *"indestructible qualities"*, lamented the fact that Olivier had failed to *"tackle its subtleties to the full"*.<sup>(276)</sup> Patrick Campbell, reviewing it for Television Today, wrote that in 1912 it was a play *"thirty years ahead of its time ... which for wit, irony, social comment and plain story-telling stands out even among the galaxy of theatrical essays of that period"*. (23 Dec.1976, p.11).

#### 15. The play : as a film

Finally, Hindle Wakes played its part in cinematic history, being made into a film on four separate occasions. The first was a silent movie in February 1918 directed by Maurice Elvey with some of the original cast from June 1912.<sup>(277)</sup> It became famous for its Blackpool Pleasure

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275. This and the ensuing information is taken from clippings and information located in the library of The British Film Institute, London: filed under 'Hindle Wakes'.

276. All these articles are dated 20 Dec.1976.

277. This and the ensuing information is taken from articles in the Library of The British Film Institute. This version is No.5250 (Category A). See Tables B and C (pp.318, 319) for cast.

Beach scenes, "permission for which had been given by the Ministry of War",<sup>(278)</sup> and at its first showing, "a crowded audience assembled at the Shaftesbury Pavilion ... to witness the screening [of] a popular success ... well adapted to the silent drama".<sup>(279)</sup>

In February 1927 it was remade, again by Maurice Elvey and again silent. This time it was also released in America but under the title of Fanny Hawthorne.<sup>(280)</sup> This production was an advance on the earlier version:

*Maurice Elvey has given most striking proof of his determination and ability to move with the times. His earlier version ... was then considered a notable advance in British production.*<sup>(281)</sup>

The Kinematograph Weekly gave further details:

*This is essentially a story that relies on atmosphere and characterisation .... Pictorial expression to convey atmosphere plays a very big part, and one cannot conceive the realism of a Lancashire cotton town and mill being better expressed .... [the] sub-titling is good, and while introducing dialect, does not strain it ... the Blackpool fun city and dance hall are sequences to be remembered ... with a 6,347 crowd ... the biggest yet screened.*<sup>(282)</sup>

The Picturegoer saw it as "an important rung in Britain's ladder of film fame" in that rather than just imitate American movies it was one of the first to "strike out a line of its own and [achieve] a truly national flavour".<sup>(283)</sup> Indeed, the Blackpool scenes were "built up into a genuine 'high spot' ... the first-time it has been attempted in

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278. The Bioscope, Vol.XXXVII, No.572, 27 Sept.1917, p.23.

279. *ibid*, Vol.xxxix, No.604, 9 May 1918, p.23.

280. No.8800 (Categ.A). See Tables B and C for cast.

281. The Bioscope, Vol.LXXX, No.1061, 10 Feb.1927, p.34.

282. Vol.120, No.1, 034, 10 Feb.1927, p.50.

283. Vol.14, No.81, Sept.1927, p.16.

an English film".<sup>(284)</sup> The Westminster Gazette (4 Feb.1927) saw it as destroying "every convention established by Hollywood" with "the most remarkable scene of all being the ride in the giant switchback ... the camera-man allowed himself to be strapped face-downwards in the very front of the coach". The World Picture News (13 Feb.1927) saw it as "a triumph of screen art ... the first really great British film ... [as] never before has local atmosphere been so successfully conveyed across the screen", a point also echoed by the Daily Mail (4 Feb.1927) which added that British films were constantly reproached for not showing the life of ordinary English people. The Times (5 March 1927) saw it as "a moving picture of value".

That Maurice Elvey should pick Hindle Wakes to break new ground was no accident. A Yorkshireman (1887-1967) he was considered "something of a rebel" (his own words), was a friend of Shaw, H.G. Wells, Sidney Webb "and many other giants of the period".<sup>(285)</sup> He founded the Adelphi Play Society in 1911 and was "shocking theatregoers by putting on such plays as 'Ghosts', 'Peer Gynt' .. and works by Strindberg, Schnitzler and Chekhov". (ibid.) He had acted since 1905, having toured with Ellen Terry and Julia Neilson. In 1912 he was engaged by Granville-Barker as a stage director. Later in America he produced more than 150 films.<sup>(286)</sup> By the end of his silent period he ranked with Herbert Wilcox and Alfred Hitchcock as "Britain's leading film makers".<sup>(287)</sup>

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284. Evening Standard, 7 Feb.1927, p.8.

285. Radio Times, 23 Dec.1955.

286. The Stage, 31 Aug.1967.

287. The Times, 27 Aug.1967.

In April 1931 the Gaumont Company approached Houghton's executors for the sound and motion picture rights of Hindle Wakes - the first 'talkie' version.<sup>(288)</sup> The director, Victor Saville, signed up Sybil Thorndike as Mrs. Hawthorn.<sup>(289)</sup> The company paid the executors £1,000 for the rights.<sup>(290)</sup> Interestingly Sybil Thorndike was not particularly keen on film work since "*acting [had] to involve direct and immediate contact with an audience ... if you project your personality on a film in the way a stage actor should project, you come right out through the screen and all realism is lost*".<sup>(291)</sup> Moreover, "*because they [the Cassons] didn't awfully like it, they never really mastered the technique of film acting*". (ibid.) Nevertheless, The Picturegoer was pleased with the outcome: "*a vivid insight into the characters .... one of the best pictures we have had lately from British studios*".<sup>(292)</sup>

Finally, in 1952 it had its last remake to date, being also released in America as Holiday Week.<sup>(293)</sup> This time it was directed by Arthur Crabtree. In a letter to Cyril Hogg<sup>(294)</sup> from Harold Brighouse one finds an interesting insight into this particular film:

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- 288. Contract dated 1 April 1931 in the Stanley Houghton Collection.
  - 289. No.79 (Category A). For cast see Tables B and C.
  - 290. On 15 April 1931: Letter from Samuel French Ltd. announcing receipt. In the Stanley Houghton Collection.
  - 291. John Casson, Lewis and Sybil : a memoir, op.cit. p.296.
  - 292. Vol.1, No.40, 27 Feb.1932, p.18.
  - 293. No.82 (Category A). For cast see Tables B and C.
  - 294. Of Samuel French Ltd. Letter dated 8 Nov.1952: in Brighouse Collection.

*Did you see the 'Hindle Wakes' film? Not bad all-over. But I made it 65 minutes before the play begins & 25 minutes for the play. And when they do reach Stanley's dialogue, what a contrast! Jeffcote with a butler! Alan's fiancée, dreadful mess. But Alan & his pal George really were two lads on the loose & all the women are good enough. Nice idea to show Jeffcote & Hawthorne fishing together. Bad idea to show a mill overlooker in love with (they call her) Jenny. On the whole I thought they got a film that reasonably mirrored the play & I don't know why it hasn't had a West End showing.*

Today's Cinema saw it as a "realistic portraiture", entering "a new lease of entertainment life" with its "considerable title pull". (295)

The Kinematograph Weekly was rather more blatant: "down-to-earth romantic comedy melodrama ... it proves that variety, as well as sex, is the spice of life" and they also saw it as expressing "sentiments that are certain to appeal to the majority". (296)

16. The play : in conclusion

Hindle Wakes was not only Houghton's most successful play in all senses of the word, but also paradoxically his greatest worry: he confided in Brighouse that he wanted

*to do a fine play but the knowledge that, no matter how fine it may be, asses of critics will persist in refusing to believe it half as good as 'Hindle Wakes' paralyses me.* (297)

The despondency had been noted by Dixon Scott who confided in Monkhouse after a visit to Houghton in January 1913 that Houghton was,

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295. Vol.LXXIV, No.6614, 20 Oct.1952, p.8.

296. Vol.427, No.2365, 23 Oct.1952, pp.21-22.

297. Letter in What I have had, op.cit. p.179. Not dated.

*so convincingly trepidant about his future: he's so very much not the swaggering cub with a curly forelock that his old photographs and perhaps even his M.G. notices had made one figure him .... Do you notice much change since 'Hindle Wakes'? (298)*

Such pessimism might on the surface seem odd for a man who had become a celebrity and achieved fame and esteem. However, the worry of how to match a success is a common problem for successful people. Moreover, Houghton was aware of the onset of ill health and had about that time made out his will.<sup>(299)</sup> It is true that none of his plays after Hindle Wakes equalled its success. Interestingly though Houghton was at about that period turning his attention away from the play towards the novel (see Ch.11). Hindle Wakes nonetheless remained in the forefront of people's minds as Dixon Scott was to tell Monkhouse shortly after Houghton's death in December 1913:

*A sentimental hypothesis now infecting London (I was up there, in Chelsea for a week some weeks ago) is to the effect that he died at the right hour, that Hindle Wakes was his big effort, the work that followed a descent: he had climbed his peak & was coming down. (300)*

Such a view will be taken into account in the conclusion to this thesis.

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298. 13 Jan.1913 (postmark), A N M 6.

299. 9 Sept.1912. See p. 400.

300. 27 Dec.1913 (postmark) A N M 6.



The success that culminated in Hindle Wakes<sup>(301)</sup> was to change Houghton's lifestyle completely. Sadly it was not to last long because of his early death. However, before looking at that aspect of his life it would be convenient to consider his final phase of playwriting.

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301. In 1934 Houghton's only sister, Muriel, and her husband William Newton Caw had a house built in Hale, Cheshire (No.102 Park Road). They named it Hindle, a name it still bears today.

HINDLE WAKESTABLE : A

(Early Venues : 1912-1913)

THEATRE	DATES	PERFORMANCES
<u>LONDON</u>		
1. Aldwych (Stage Society)	16-17 June	2
2. The Coronet	19 and 21 June	2
3. The Playhouse	16 July-26 Sept	83
4. The Court	28 Sept-19 Oct	26
		113
<u>MANCHESTER</u>		
5. The Gaiety	28 Oct-9 Nov	14
	16 Dec-21 Dec	7
6. The provinces (touring) in five companies.	Oct 1912-1913	?
<u>AMERICA</u>		
7. Maxine Elliott's Theatre (New York)	9 Dec 1912-c.11 Jan 1913	32
8. Fine Arts Theatre (Chicago)	4 Feb-c.1 March	c.27
9. Olympic Theatre (Chicago)	c.3 March-c.29 March	c.28
10. Unknown theatres in Indianapolis, Cincinnati, Philadelphia	1913	?

# HINDLE WAKES

(as a film)

TABLE : B

Houghton's original characters : actors/actresses

Year	Director	Mrs.H.	Chris	Fanny	Mrs.J.	Nat	Alan	Sir T.	Beatrice	Ada
1918 (silent)	Maurice Elvey	Ada King	Edward O'Neill	Colette O'Neil	Not listed	Norman McKinnel	Hayford Hobbs	Frank Dare	Margaret Bannerman	-
1927 (silent) Also released in America under the title of <u>Fanny Hawthorne</u>	Maurice Elvey	Marie Ault	Humberston Wright	Estelle Brody	Irene Rooke	Norman McKinnel	John Stuart	Arthur Chesney	Gladys Jennings	-
1931 (talking)	Victor Saville	Sybil Thorndike	Edmund Gwenn	Belle Chrystal	Mary Clare	Norman McKinnel	John Stuart	A. G. Poulton	Muriel Angelus	-
1952 (talking) Also released in America under the title of <u>Holiday Week</u>	Arthur Crabtree	Joan Hickson	Leslie Dwyer	Lisa Daniely (character name changed to Jenny)	Mary Clare	Ronald Adam	Brian Worth	Lloyd Pearson	Diana Hope	-

# HINDLE WAKES

(as a film)

TABLE : C

Additional characters : actors/actresses

Year	Mary	George	Tommy	Bob	Nobby	Alf	Mr. Hollins
1918 (silent)	Dolly Tree	-	-	-	-	-	-
1927 (silent)	Peggy Carlisle	-	-	-	Alf Goddard	Cyril McLaglen	Graham Soutten
1931 (talking)	Ruth Peterson	-	-	-	-	-	-
1952 (talking)	Sandra Dorne	Michael Medwin	Tim Turner	Bill Travers	-	-	-

CHAPTER NINE

FINAL PLAYS

PHIPPS

PEARLS

TRUST THE PEOPLE

THE WEATHER

The latter part of 1912 saw the writing of Houghton's final plays:

Phipps; Pearls; Trust the People.<sup>(1)</sup> All three were commissioned by the well-known actor-manager Arthur Bouchier (1863-1927) who began his own career at Oxford where he founded the University Dramatic Society. From there he joined Lillie Langtry's Company before moving to the Garrick Theatre as manager.<sup>(2)</sup> He gave his life to the theatre and frequently lectured on it. His wife, Violet Vanbrugh (1867-1942) was a distinguished actress who in the 1890's was engaged by Irving and was on one occasion Ellen Terry's understudy. Bouchier presented her as his leading lady in many productions, her acting being regarded as having "*distinction, polish and versatility*".<sup>(3)</sup> Indeed, it was held that "*much of the success of her husband's ventures ... [was] due to her talent and popularity*". (ibid.) Within two weeks of the first showing of Hindle Wakes, these two invited Houghton to one of their plays and afterwards to their home:

*Last night I spent at the Garrick ('Find the Woman', My God! What a play!)(4) and afterwards was borne off by Bouchier & Violet Vanbrugh to supper 'intime' in their house. Very charming & a jolly good supper - served by Miss Vanbrugh's maid & Miss Vanbrugh herself - the servants had all gone to bed. A.B. is not very intelligent - but is not fool enough to believe his present play anything but 'tosh'. I am to write him.*

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1. This does not include The Weather; see p.337.
  2. O.C.T. p.121.
  3. ibid. p.981. See also Violet Vanbrugh, Dare to be Wise, Hodder and Stoughton, 1925.
  4. By Charles H. Klein, which had been on at the theatre since 17 June 1912. (see O.C.T. p.768).

*a long and a short play, if our business advisers  
can come to terms. We were above such things.* (5)

It will be recalled that Bouchier had been offered Hindle Wakes for production by Houghton's agent shortly after its original showing but declined it for reasons already given (see p.250). Apart from the two commissions referred to in the above letter Houghton was also to write him another short play.

The first of these was a one-act comedy, Phipps, written in September 1912. (6) The contract, however, did not specify a title: it merely stated a "*One Act Play*", although Phipps has subsequently been added in pencil. (7) Houghton was paid £25 (£650 in 1981) immediately with a promise of a further £25 upon delivery of the manuscript "*not later than December 1, 1912*". Bouchier, for his part, agreed to produce it "*at a first class London West End Theatre or ... Theatre of Varieties within two years*". He was also entitled to hold the performing rights for ten years. Interestingly, Houghton was to be paid £1 (£26 in 1981) per performance at any theatre but £10 (£260 in 1981) per week if played at any variety theatre or music-hall.

The play was submitted to the Lord Chamberlain for licence on 5 November 1912 for performance at the Garrick Theatre, London, on the 19 of the same month. (8) The typescript bears the words "*Property of Arthur Bouchier, Garrick*". The Examiner of Plays' review is to hand and provides a summary of the plot along with an amusing conclusion:

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5. Houghton to Monkhouse, 2 July 1912, ANM 10.
  6. Introduction, p.lv.
  7. Contract in Stanley Houghton Collection. No date other than 1912 given.
  8. L.C.P. Vol.44, No.1081.

*Phipps is the discreet butler who is called in by his mistress to be a witness to her husband's technical "cruelty" when he strikes her a pre-arranged blow, to justify their divorce. After a whimsical illustration of Phipps' two attitudes, as well trained servant and a preux chevalier, it turns out that the message on the telephone which roused his mistresses' jealous suspicion of her husband was sent by an innamorato of his own named Tiny, who has thus caused an amount of domestic trouble disproportionate to her name. An amusing trifle, and*

*Recommended for licence.*

*E. A. Bendall*

The play was staged after The Havoc (H. Sophus Sheldon, 1912) in aid of the "enlargement Fund of The Cedars Institute, Battersea" for working men, women and children, for education, infant care, nursing, etc.<sup>(9)</sup> It would appear that Bouchier wanted, and indeed made, several changes to the script, a habit he frequently exhibited:

*he was at his best in truculent, fiery or broad, hearty parts, but had little subtlety and hotly resented criticism, spoiling much of his best work by impatience and over-eagerness.*<sup>(10)</sup>

The changes he made were eventually made known: The Referee, reviewing The Works of Stanley Houghton noted that "'Phipps' a social extravaganza ... was acted in a mutilated form at the Garrick in November, 1912",<sup>(11)</sup> whilst Samuel French in its publication of Houghton's Five One-Act Plays (1913) added that "another version [was] performed by Bouchier ... [in] November 1912". Indeed, C. E. Montague, reviewing the Five One-Act Plays, stressed that very point.<sup>(12)</sup> Bouchier was quick to answer the charge made by The Referee. In the same journal (at a later date) he replied that:

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9. Programme in Enthoven Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum. The play was subtitled "a comediotta" although this does not appear in The Works, Vol.3, p.115.

10. O.C.T., p.121.

11. 5 July 1914, H.C. Vol.N.

12. The Manchester Guardian, 6 Feb 1913, Montague Collection.

*With regard to 'Phipps', Mr. Houghton requested me to make the alterations necessary for stage purposes. (13)*

This, however, would seem not to be completely true: Houghton, in a letter to Monkhouse, was bitter about the changes:

*I have been to rehearsals at ... the Garrick ....  
I spent much time inducing Bouchier to delete the  
idiotic gags & business with which he has studded  
the piece. (14)*

The play was not as successful as it might have been, perhaps in part due to Bouchier's alterations. Brighouse only acknowledges the alterations in Volume 3 (p.309). In his Introduction he merely notes that *"it is enough to say that for plays written on commission there is but one standard for criticism, and that the success standard"* (p.lv). Later the play had its title changed to Ask The Butler.<sup>(15)</sup>

In the summer of 1913 the play was taken to America by Iden Payne who, it will be recalled, had been persuaded by the actor Whitford Kane to take up a position as director of the Chicago Theatre Society (see p.178). His first production consisted of four one-act plays *"which were much in vogue"*. These included Houghton's The Master of The House and Phipps.<sup>(16)</sup> The latter opened on 27 September 1913.<sup>(17)</sup> Just over a year later, on 17 October 1914, it was taken to New York<sup>(18)</sup> where it was the first play in a group of five to be acted at the One-Act Play

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13. 12 July 1914, H.C. Vol.N.

14. 6 Nov.1912, ANM 10.

15. A. Nicoll, English Drama 1900-1930, op.cit. p.734. No other details are given. Brighouse makes no mention of this new title.

16. Are We All Met, op.cit. pp.153 and 156.

17. A Guide to Critical Reviews, (Part 3), op.cit. pp.125-6.

18. *ibid.*



Theatre. The New York Times reviewing it on 18 October (p.3) saw it as *"the most inconsiderable trifle of all ... done in one of the airy moments of the late Stanley Houghton"*. They noted it as being in *"the spirit of travesty"*, and amusing, but only *"in spots"*. Tinsley Pratt said much the same thing about it in England:

*It is an airy trifle, with little relation to real life, but as an experiment in the bizarre [it] is quite effective and mildly amusing".* (19)

The play was published in America by French in One Act Plays for Stage and Study.

As a one-act play Percival Wilde<sup>(20)</sup> saw it as having some excellent qualities:

*an illustration of an excellent opening ... perhaps too excellent ... [because] never afterwards does the play rise to the surpassing height of interest attained at the moment the butler knocks his master down.*

He sees the use of complication within a play as being a method of increasing interest and cites Phipps as a good example (p.191).

The origins of the play are not difficult to trace. The theme of the play is the difficulty of divorce, a topic of central importance to the Edwardians. Without repeating what I have already said earlier (pp.221-22) it will be sufficient to recall that *"the issue of divorce ... remained ... a lively public issue for the rest of the Edwardian period"*.<sup>(21)</sup> Shaw had already treated it in great detail in 1908 in Getting Married. In it he clearly stated his belief that the system of specifying grounds for divorce was a mistake. One such specification

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19. The Manchester Dramatists, op.cit. p.219.

20. The Craftsmanship of the One-Act Play, Allen and Unwin, 1923, p.212.

21. Samuel Hynes, op.cit. p.192.

was assault by the husband: Shaw wrote:

The General: ... beat your wife in private and not in the presence of the gardener.

Reginald: What's the good of beating your wife unless there's a witness to prove it afterwards? You don't suppose a man beats his wife for the fun of it, do you? How could she have got her divorce if I hadn't beaten her? ...

The General: Do you mean to tell me that you did it in cold blood? Simply to get rid of your wife?

Reginald: No, I didn't: I did it to get rid of me  
....

The General: Am I to understand that the whole case was one of collusion?

Reginald: Of course it was. Half the cases are collusions: what are people to do? (22)

Phipps is centred entirely around this aspect. Indeed the similarity is striking. Compare the above with Houghton's play which opens with Sir Gerald and Lady Fanny rehearsing their intended 'assault':

Lady F: Well, why don't you hit me? ...

Sir G: ... I have no objection to striking you, my dear: only it is no good doing it in private. In that case, you would be unable to prove my cruelty .... if you wish to get a divorce there must be a witness of some sort when I strike you.

(The Works, Vol.3, p.120)

To be fair to Houghton the topic had been republicized in 1912 by the publication of the Divorce Law Reform Union's pamphlet Divorce and Morality. Also the Royal Commission on Divorce and Matrimonial Causes, established in 1910, published some far reaching proposals in 1912. It was "the first full inquiry into marriage and divorce ever held in England, and probably the first anywhere". (23)

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22. Constable, 1947, pp.274-5.

23. Samuel Hynes, op.cit. p.208.

Finally in 1928, the play took on a new lease of life: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer signed up the motion picture rights of the play. On 28 November of that year Houghton's sister and her husband received \$2,000 for the rights. The contract was witnessed by the Vice-Consul of the United States in Manchester.<sup>(24)</sup> The film was released on 7 January 1929 in sound and black and white but with the title of Nearly Divorced.<sup>(25)</sup> Unfortunately the American Film Institute do not have any written details concerning the cast, credits or synopsis data because it was not a full length feature film and therefore did not appear in any of the standard directories.<sup>(26)</sup>

Houghton wrote Pearls in October 1912<sup>(27)</sup> for Bouchier. Why Brighouse did not see fit to include this one-act play in The Works is puzzling, particularly when he thought highly of it:

*'Pearls', which was designed expressly for the music-halls, was successfully acted by Mr. Bouchier and Miss Violet Vanbrugh at the Coliseum and other music-halls. Houghton made no higher claim for 'Pearls' than that it met a case, but that it did successfully meet the case of the music-halls was distinctly a feather in his cap. Other dramatists have sometimes condescended to the music-halls, to find themselves rebuffed. Houghton adapted himself to their peculiar demand, and made a success.*<sup>(28)</sup>

Houghton, as I have argued, had already written a successful music-hall sketch with Fancy Free (see p.218). He knew the ingredients for success and all he needed was a plot; Bouchier supplied it:

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24. Contract and other details in the Stanley Houghton Collection.  
25. Motion Pictures 1912-1939, The Library of Congress, Washington, 1951, p.580.  
26. Confirmed by the Institute in a letter of 14 April 1982.  
27. Introduction, p.lv.  
28. *ibid.*

*During the (alas!) short time I had the privilege of knowing Mr. Houghton I told him the story of 'Pearls'. He was so struck with its possibilities as a piece for the variety stage that he at once set to work to write it - as he charmingly put it - in collaboration. That it has proved one of the most successful sketches my wife and I have played during our recent variety engagements affords us one more pleasant memory of that delightful and accomplished young man.* (29)

In an interview<sup>(30)</sup> given by Houghton when he attended its first showing in Glasgow he acknowledged he had written it for Bouchier but made no mention of his having been told the story.

Although a typed copy of the play is to be found in the British Museum<sup>(31)</sup> another copy has recently come to light and reveals for the first time that the play originally had a different title: The Minion of the Law.<sup>(32)</sup> The present title has been hand-written over the typed one by Houghton. It also carries his London address. One finds several changes in Houghton's hand in the body of this latter text and there are also comments and suggestions in another hand - presumably Bouchier's. The changes were made quickly and the 'revised' copy sent for typing to Marshall's of the Strand, where it was completed on 26 October 1912.<sup>(33)</sup> The title page reads: *"'Pearls': a comedy in one Act by Stanley Houghton. Property of Arthur Bouchier, Garrick Theatre, London"*. It was submitted to the Lord Chamberlain on 7 December and licensed two days later: No.1203, for performance at the Pavilion, Glasgow on 20 December 1912. This first performance is not mentioned by Brighouse. The plot is very simple but effective, as noted by the Examiner of Plays :

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29. The Referee, 12 July 1914, H.C. Vol.N.

30. Glasgow Evening Times, 20 Dec.1912, p.4.

31. L.C.P. Vol.50. A copy of this is now on microfilm in the Stanley Houghton Collection.

32. The typescript is in the Stanley Houghton Collection.

33. A company stamp bears this date.

*A husband is in straitened circumstances through gambling discovers to his horror that his wife, through a sudden impulse, has stolen a pearl necklace at the opera in order to pay their debts. This discovery, together with the subsequent alarm of public detection, brings out all that is best in the nature both of man and woman, bringing also a dramatic little play to a highly effective conclusion.*

*Recommended for licence.*

*E. A. Bendall*

The build up of tension within the play is formidable with everything depending upon its policeman's entry and subsequent lines. Houghton fully realised that this would be the crucial point of the play and therefore wrote that Roberts, the policeman,

*must be a fine, dignified man, and must speak in an ordinary business-like tone. He must not be in the least the comic policeman.*

This enabled Roberts, after a "rather painful pause" to say:

*Beg your pardon, sir, but did you know that you've left your kitchen window open? (p.22)*

The play continued to be a success, moving to the London Coliseum on 6 January 1913.<sup>(34)</sup> Two years later Bouchier was still playing in it when he arrived in Manchester to deliver the eulogy at the unveiling of the memorial plaque to Houghton on 10 February 1915 (see p.406). It played all that week (8-13 Feb) at the Hippodrome, Oxford Street. The Manchester Evening News welcomed the venture as

*an opportunity for the first time of seeing the late Stanley Houghton's highly dramatic one-act play 'Pearls' ... written in Houghton's tensest fashion and ... perfectly played by Mr. Bouchier and Miss Vanbrugh. It was an unmistakable success.*

*(9 Feb.1915, p.6)*

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34. A. Nicoll, English Drama 1900-1930, p.734.

Houghton's last complete play was written for Bouchier in the last few months of 1912. The contract was originally designated "*A Full Play*" but later the title Trust the People was added. This three-act play has also been excluded from The Works. Other than the year 1912 the contract is undated save to say that Houghton had to deliver "*a completed manuscript of the said Play to the Manager [Bouchier] on or before the thirtieth day of November*". For this he was paid £75 (£1,950 in 1981) on signing with a further £75 on delivery. Bouchier was also to hold the rights for a year but with the provision of extending it to two years on payment of £100 (£2,600 in 1981). He was also to have the option "*within six weeks following the first performance*" of acquiring the American and Canadian rights on payment of £150 (£3,900 in 1981) on account of royalties.<sup>(35)</sup>

According to Brighthouse the play was written "*between October and December*"<sup>(36)</sup> 1912. This, however, is not precise enough. First of all one finds that Houghton, by 26 September 1912, was able to tell Monkhouse that "*I am writing Bouchier a long play*"<sup>(37)</sup> Secondly the contract stated that the play had to be in Bouchier's hands by 30 November. Two copies of the play (typescripts) are known to exist, one only having recently come to light: one is lodged with the Lord Chamberlain's Plays (L.C.P. Vol.52) and the other is in the Stanley Houghton Collection. Both are curious mixtures of the original and revision. The L.C.P. copy bears the receipt date of 16 December 1912. It also has the typing agency's stamp of 13 December (on Act 3's cover).

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35. Contract in the Stanley Houghton Collection.

36. Introduction, p.lv.

37. ANM 10.

The other copy bears the agency's date as 30 November 1912 on the title page. It has several alterations with Act I's title page signed by Houghton and with his words "*scene altered*" nearby. The changes amount to a reduction in speaking parts from 17 to 14 and the sub-division of Act 2 into two scenes. Interestingly, a letter inside Act 3 of the copy in the Stanley Houghton Collection provides more information. It is from Bouchier's theatre, the Strand, to Houghton's mother:

*I am sending the MS of 'Trust the People'. You will notice that there are many pencilled marks and alterations. These you can ignore as they are only stage manager's suggestions, etc. The typescript is, I understand, your son's original version.* (38)

The origin of the play's title is symptomatic of Houghton's awareness of the topical. 1910 had seen two general elections with the cry of the Unionists being "*Trust the People - rather than the autocracy of the Cabinet*".<sup>(39)</sup> Also The Manchester Guardian, in its detailed coverage of the elections, carried reports containing the very phrase used by Houghton: "*Trust the People*", the proposal of the House of Lords" (29 November, p.9); and "*Trust the People to govern themselves*" (30 Nov. p.12); and finally, as a single headline, "*Trust the People*" (1 Dec. p.10). However, he did not intend to write a political play but rather a play of human interest involved within the world of high politics. Indeed, the Examiner of Plays made a note of this prior to

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38. Although undated the letter has a printed date format thus: - 192 -, indicating a letter of the 1920's. Houghton's father was usually written to in connection with his son's works and as he died in 1923 the letter must be after then.

39. Quoted by Dr. Gaberthuel, op,cit. p.162,

reviewing it:

*This is a play dealing with politics, Ministers & an Election. But it is made plain that it is in no sense a satire on the present Cabinet. The period is in the future: the interest of the play is human, not political.* (40)

Houghton had in fact written on the scenes' division page: "Time:  
In the future. The year 19--".

Bourchier provides an insight into the play's actual writing and also helps account for the variety and changes within the two typescripts:

*In the case of 'Trust the People' he [Houghton] frankly acknowledged his difficulties after writing his clever and mordant first act. I was anxious not to disappoint him or it would have been wiser to have advised him to reconsider the premises of his story with a view to its chances of financial success. In the later scenes Mr. Houghton was generous enough to say that I had done everything possible to help him in the production of his work.* (41)

The play was submitted to the Lord Chamberlain for licence which it received on 17 December 1912 for production at the Garrick on 23 December. (42) (It was not acted, however, for a further six weeks).

The Examiner of Plays reviewed it as follows:

*"John Greenwood jun" a man of the people, President of the 'Labour Board' is engaged to "Lady Violet Arnerley" daughter of Lord Cheadle, an Opposition Peer. Before Greenwood had ever met, he got into an entanglement with a certain "Mrs Felton", a lady with a blackmailing husband. They have quite got over their mutual enthusiasm - in fact they haven't met since Greenwood has known Lady Violet; but the husband - hoping to be squared - brings an action for divorce from his wife, with Greenwood as co-respondent. This necessitates his applying for the Chiltern Hundreds. He puts up again for Blackshaw - 'trusting the people' & believing that they will respect his honesty & re-elect him.*

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40. L.C.P. Vol.52.

41. The Referee, 12 July 1914, H.C. Vol.N.

42. No.1247.



*His opponent is "Lord Richard Northenden" - Lord Cheadle's son & Lady Violet's brother. Lord Cheadle, by means of a trick, makes it appear to the electors (and to Lady Violet) on the eve of the election, that Greenwood is still carrying on with Mrs. Felton. In consequence, he loses his seat. But Lady Violet, who really loves him, comes to his parents' cottage, seeks him out & proposes to him; a cynical but good hearted friend "Lord Eccles" - offers him a remunerative position & all ends happily.*

*Recommended for Licence.*

*Charles E. Brookfield*

The play was first produced at the Garrick on 6 February 1913.<sup>(43)</sup>

The difficulties encountered by Houghton in the revision of the play during rehearsals probably accounts for it not being staged on the date first given to the Examiner of Plays . It was originally scheduled to run for a hundred shows<sup>(44)</sup> but was taken off after only forty-four. Almost immediately the Press berated it:

*From the first it was obvious that the play would be a failure; almost without exception, the critics condemned the work as savouring of melodrama, a sad departure from the standard of 'Hindle Wakes'.* (45)

It will be recalled that Houghton had anticipated Hindle Wakes being set up as a work never to be equalled or bettered:

*I want to do a fine play but the knowledge that, no matter how fine it may be, asses of critics will persist to believe it half as good as 'Hindle Wakes' paralyses me.* (46)

Yet not all critics had denounced it as implied above:

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43. Introduction, p.lv.

44. John Palmer, The Future of the Theatre, op.cit. p.37.

45. Everyman, 24 Dec,1913, p.360.

46. Letter in What I have had, op.cit, p.179. No date.

*Neither the author nor the actor-manager has much to fear from the reception of this clever little play, which at the close called forth cheers from a crowded house .... The characterisation is clearly cut .... Epigrammatic and witty it is, and the touch of pathos in the last act has a genuine ring. (47)*

The Bystander magazine (19 February 1913, pp.391 ff.) devoted several pages to it, including many sketches, with the caption

*Mr. Arthur Bouchier's successful production at the Garrick Theatre raises the old question of the private morals of public men.*

It noted that Houghton had "*handled his subject with a happy wit, which flashes out here and there with a delightfully inconsequential freedom*". It did note faults, however, but conceded that "*one at least ... can be easily remedied by the Stage management*". The Tatler (No.608) of 19 February carried photographs of the play (pp.211 and 231). An unidentified clipping inside a programme commented that the subject of the play was almost of "*national interest*". Moreover,

*the piece undoubtedly found favour ... and the call for the author when the curtain fell was so insistent that Mr. Houghton was at last forced to appear. (48)*

The Pall Mall Gazette<sup>(49)</sup> summed the play up as "*Post-Futurist Drama*" and perhaps gave an indication of why it failed:

*We would suggest that in writing his next play he returns to those phases of English life which he depicted in his two previous three-act plays, and which he knows something about. To put it mildly, his ideas of the aristocracy and of political life are at present, apparently, slightly fantastic.*

It would seem that Houghton, because he had presented a picture of the future and not the present, was not appreciated and moreover because he had left the realms of Lancashire and delved into the metropolis was not

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47. The Manchester Programme, 17 Feb, 1913, p.8,

48. Located in the Enthoven Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum.

49. Undated, *ibid.*

welcomed. Political plays were, however, notoriously difficult to write. Pinero recognised this: to William Archer he said

*I don't think you realise the difficulty of dealing on the English Stage with any special environment, other than what is vaguely known as society. A serious political play is impossible; we take our politics so tragically in real life that we can only make a farce of them in the theatre.* (50)

The Pall Mall Gazette above had even said, "one may pray with a good deal of fervour not to be spared to live in a world quite so vulgar and so silly as that exhibited in 'Trust the People'."

Houghton was bitter about the whole affair:

*They want to condemn me to write about Lancashire for ever ... Oh, don't talk about it! I want to forget that I ever wrote it.* (51)

The above conversation was reported by Cyril Roberts as a discussion he had had with Houghton shortly after the play's failure. He added that Houghton, however, "admitted the justice of the verdict. He was bitterly disappointed, not so much at the failure of the piece as at himself". Indeed, he felt that he had "been untrue to his art, and had lowered himself in attempting to write a play that would 'take' and a part that would 'suit'. One may recall this fear being expressed by Houghton in private to Professor George Pierce Baker:

*Your hope that I may write some good plays is one that I echo. I fear, however, that I shall probably be forced to consider the public & the managers more than I have done in 'Hindle Wakes'.* (52)

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50. Quoted by J.C. Trewin, The Edwardian Theatre, op.cit. p.32.

51. Everyman, 24 Dec.1913, p.360.

52. W.P. Kinne, George Pierce Baker and the American Theatre, op.cit. p.161

John Palmer blamed Houghton entirely for bowing to public demand:

*He was no longer an amateur writing to please himself. He was a professional author writing for an audience at the Garrick Theatre. The play was produced; and the public invited to come for a hundred nights. But the public did not go. 'Trust the People', expressly written for the public, did not please the public [despite having] .... all the ingredients of a really popular play ... handled with quite an astonishing neatness and dexterity. (53)*

Rushed writing and bad acting were not excuses to fall back upon.

Houghton spent as long on Trust the People as he did on Hindle Wakes and longer than on The Younger Generation; he also thought Bourchier's acting "*superlatively good*".<sup>(54)</sup> This latter point helps to discount the view of Anthony Ellis who thought that the play "*with some difference in the method of production would have had ... a happier fate*".<sup>(55)</sup>

The play's fate, according to Brighouse, was inevitable:

*The simple fact is that 'Trust the People' is a sick man's work, (56)*

and by excluding it from The Works he was merely following Houghton's own wishes.

Finally, it is worth noting that two other plays have been compared with Trust the People: one is J.M. Barrie's What Every Woman Knows (1908) and Harold Brighouse's Garside's Career (1914). George Mair, whilst reviewing the latter for The Manchester Guardian the night of

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53. The Future of the Theatre, op.cit. p.37. Brighouse quotes a large section of this, pp.lv-lvi.

54. Introduction, pp.lvi-lvii.

55. The English Review, January 1914, p.276,

56. Introduction, p.lvii.

its first showing at the Gaiety, wrote that it was:

*a comedy of politics, and, without being imitative, it reminds you of other things of its kind, of 'What Every Woman Knows' and Mr. Houghton's 'Trust the People' ... for while Mr. Houghton's hero fell through a woman and Sir James Barrie's was saved by one, Mr. Brighouse's plays with one and is salvaged, without being saved, by another, and falls, so far as he falls at all, through himself.* (57)

Brighouse in fact based his play "*loosely on the rise and eclipse of Victor Grayson*",<sup>(58)</sup> an independent Socialist elected for Colne Valley (Lancashire) in 1907. Houghton must have known about Grayson and may even have heard him speak at one of his many public engagements in Manchester. In September 1911, for example, such was Grayson's popularity in Manchester that "*the halls overflowed ... and hundreds were turned away*".<sup>(59)</sup> In Grayson's private life one finds echoes of Greenwood's in Trust the People. For example, Grayson, prior to his wedding, had been "*friendly with a fairly well-to-do woman*" (ibid. p.120), and soon after his marriage and return to Parliament "*a married woman followed Victor to London from the Colne Valley*". (ibid. p.122). Grayson's wedding, in November 1912, was featured in many newspapers. In fact he married an actress and had as his best man a well-known actor-manager of the time, Arthur L. Rose.<sup>(60)</sup> Houghton may well have heard about Grayson's private life through gossip, as he was, during the play's creation, living in London and

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57. 3 Feb.1914, H.C. Vol.M. The Daily Telegraph 3 Feb, and The Times 12 May (it played The Coronet from 11 May) said similar things.

58. What I have had, op.cit. p.57.

59. R. Groves, The Strange Case of Victor Grayson, Pluto Press, 1975 p.112.

60. 1887-1958. See Who Was Who in the Theatre 1912-76, Vol.4. p.2072.

moving in those circles where such gossip, if anywhere, was likely to be heard. It is interesting too that Houghton should make Greenwood a member for 'Blackshaw' which is possibly a combination of Blacko and Laneshaw Bridge, both of which lie either side of Colne.

As this section is dealing with Houghton's final plays it would be relevant to mention here one other play which is incomplete and has only recently come to light. As such it will be necessary to move forward in time some six months to Paris where Houghton had just made his home. There, between May and June 1913, he wrote The Weather, "*a comedy in three acts*" of which only eighteen pages survive.<sup>(61)</sup> The typescript carries Houghton's new French address and also his parents'. It has the words "*First Copy*" typed on the title cover and has alterations to it in Houghton's hand. Seven of the ten characters have their personalities and intended developments outlined next to them as was the case in Ginger (see p.179). The daughters in the play remind one of King Lear in that three are set against a fourth, Cicely, who is described as being "*put on & not considered by the other sisters*". Indeed, she is the only daughter who is considerate towards the rather short-tempered, domineering father. There is also more than a chance reminiscence of Wuthering Heights. Consider the following:

*The action takes place in the breakfast-room at Welcome Heights, Thring, the Fulshaw's country house on the moors above the North Lancashire manufacturing town of Clitherham".*

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61. Now in the Stanley Houghton Collection.

'Clitherham' must be a combination of Clitheroe and Padiham, both of which are very close to Haworth. Interestingly, the eldest daughter, Kate, is described as "*managing. eldest. runs house. practical. talks to father*", and reminds one of Maggie in Hobson's Choice, a play title it will be recalled which was originally in Houghton's possession and which was rediscovered by Brighouse as he searched through Houghton's papers in 1914 to prepare The Works (see p.88). Brighouse, of course, eventually used the title in 1915. If one compares the discussion held by the sisters on marriage in The Weather and the father's subsequent complaints about their behaviour in his house one is fairly reminded of a similar incident in Hobson's Choice.<sup>(62)</sup>

It is difficult to estimate just what type of plot was to follow but there are some hints. For example, Ethel is described as a confirmed Suffragette, dedicated to "*the Cause*" and who is anxious to meet "*Mrs. Pangbourne*" (no doubt Mrs. Pankhurst) and Mrs. Desmond Amy Kelly (no doubt Annie Kenney). Reference is also made to "*the weavers .... Lancashire girls .... too satisfied with the good wages they earn*", which reminds one of Fanny in Hindle Wakes. The treatment was no doubt to be light-hearted as seen from the opening lines in which a discussion about the cold weather takes place between two of the sisters:

Ethel: "*Oh to be in England, now that April's there*".  
*Brrrh!*

Kate: *Who wrote that?*

Ethel: *I forget. One of those Mid Victorians ...*

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62. Heinemann, 1972, pp.5-8.

Kate:      *Well, he's welcome to it, whoever he was.  
England in April! Give me Italy.*      (p.1.)

The play has similarities with two of Houghton's earlier plays:

Adam Moss: Bachelor and The Hillarys (see p. 38 and p. 188 respectively).

Brighthouse does not mention The Weather by name but was probably

alluding to it when he wrote that Houghton "*made in Paris notes of two plays, a country house comedy and a Lancashire play*" (p. lvi). As

The Weather was a combination of the above it may have been the case that from Houghton's notes there eventually emerged just the one play as no reference has been found to either a solitary "*country house*" script nor "*a Lancashire*" one.

The above plays, when compared with Hindle Wakes, would seem to indicate a decline in Houghton's skills as a dramatist. This, however, would be to overlook some important factors surrounding the writing of these plays. Two major influences have already been mentioned: Houghton's declining health and his writing to order. This latter point must not be underestimated, as the playwright Alfred Sutro vividly recollected:

*I chanced to meet him [Houghton], a month or two later [after the London showing of Hindle Wakes]; we liked each other and went for a walk together, and I, as a much older man, ventured to give him advice. "Everyone will be wanting plays from you now", I said to him, "offering you commissions, and large sums down. Don't take them. Don't handicap yourself by trying to write a play for any particular actor, as you must, if you accept his commission; do your work in your own way, in your own time; when you have finished the play you won't have the least difficulty in placing it, and it will be the better because you will have been perfectly free in your choice of your theme and your characters". He heartily agreed with me; he thought I was right, as I was; but alas, the temptation was too*



*strong for him, he did accept commissions; he wrote a couple of plays for actor-managers, they failed, and I have always believed that their failure had much to do with his subsequent illness, from which he died. He was a very great loss to the theatre. (63)*

A third factor also needs to be considered: Houghton was becoming more and more interested in the novel as a literary vehicle, a move begun several years earlier with his short stories and sketches and culminating in the beginnings of a novel around the very period of composition of the above plays (see Ch.11). Before considering his prose works, however, an account will be given of the changes in Houghton's life style brought about by the success of Hindle Wakes: his life in London and Paris.

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63. A. Sutro, Celebrities and Simple Souls, Duckworth, 1933, pp.218-219.

## CHAPTER TEN

### LONDON AND PARIS

The fame and relative fortune that came with Hindle Wakes enabled Houghton to give up full-time employment. It also altered his personality:

*after his success, reserve left him .... London had cured him of self-consciousness .... he became ... a talker, giving out from himself where before he was too often, through sheer shyness, contented only to receive.* (1)

He now wanted to be amongst London's elite and as such took the first step by moving permanently to the City.

At first he stayed in hotels, (2) presumably whilst looking for rented accommodation, which he duly found. It was at a large block of flats called Burleigh Mansions, at 20 Charing Cross Road. Houghton rented No.15, on the top floor. The building and room still stand (in 1983). Lord Miles recollects that theatrical people of all kinds lived there and had done so for over a century. (3) It is of course in the middle of London's theatre land. However, investigation shows that Houghton's arrival at the flat was not accidental. The records of tenancy show that No.15 was occupied by a Mr. A. Berebze and a Mr. Gilbert Clarke who both held the tenancy from 29 September 1910 for three years. (4)

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1. Introduction, pp.xvi-xvii.
  2. e.g. Arundel Hotel, Victoria Embankment: address on a letter 2 July 1912, ANM 10.
  3. Letter of 16 April 1982. For example (Sir) Donald Wolfit lived there. See fn.4.
  4. Facts supplied by the owner of the building, Mr. Arthur Grover, Suite 49, 26 Charing Cross Road, London.

Nothing has been established about the first tenant but the latter was Miss Horniman's costume designer at the Gaiety.<sup>(5)</sup> Clarke had initially worked in a leading London fashion shop at the turn of the century, an episode he wrote about at the behest of Somerset Maugham who then incorporated it into his novel Of Human Bondage.<sup>(6)</sup> From there he took up employment with a West End firm of designers, having worked on projects for the renowned Edwardian impresario George Edwardes.<sup>(7)</sup> He joined the Gaiety in December 1909.<sup>(8)</sup> He was also an actor of small parts, having worked in the Benson Company at the Adelphi Theatre, London. He eventually appeared in several plays at the Gaiety.<sup>(9)</sup> He even designed a costume for Violet Vanbrugh's daughter, a commission which directly led to his being employed by Lady Duff Gordon (of whom more will be said shortly). Clarke eventually became M.G.M.'s Chief Costume designer.<sup>(10)</sup>

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5. The Gaiety Theatre Christmas Annual 1910, pp.62-3
  6. Heinemann, 1977, pp.793-821. First published as Bondage, (1915). According to A. Adburgham, Shops and Shopping 1800-1914, Allen and Unwin, 1964, pp.243-244, Clarke wrote 6,000 words and Maugham paid him thirty guineas: "*Willie used my stuff practically word for word*" Clarke noted (p.243). Interestingly, the Clarke piece contains the sentence, "*As good as Paquin and half the price*" (p.813). Houghton used Paquin to illustrate a point in an interview he gave (see p.278 *supra*).
  7. O.C.T. pp.270-271.
  8. The Gaiety Theatre Christmas Annual 1910, op.cit.
  9. His name appears on several Gaiety Playbills in Manchester Central Reference Library, Theatre Collection, ref.Ma.117.
  10. For a record of the films he designed for see Elizabeth Leese, Costume Design in the Movies, BCW/Ungar (New York), 1976, p.35, and David Chierichetti, Hollywood Costume Design, Harmony Books, 1976.

Houghton may well have been invited to share the flat by Clarke. He regarded it as his home, for the near future at least. On 31 August 1912 he informed Miss Horniman that he was "*in London now for some long time; my address is at the top of the paper*", (i.e. 15 Burleigh Mansions).<sup>(11)</sup> By Christmas of 1912, however, he had acquired the lease in his own name for one year at an annual rent of £65 (£1,690 in 1981). Sadly though he was not to live that long. The flat was cosy, as recorded by Dixon Scott:

*I called at Stanley Houghton's flat the other day - and it's the snuggest little nest of a place you ever did, embedded away up in the rigging of the big mass of buildings that divides St. Martin's Lane from Charing Cross Road, and all electric lights and brushed carpets and gas stoves and bright bathrooms.*<sup>(12)</sup>

In the same letter Scott mentions various invitations lying around the flat: his fame and the central location of his residence meant that he was able to be "*lionised by society ... badgered by editors, tempted by commissions from managers (most of which he declined)*" and perhaps most significantly, "*courted by his own profession*".<sup>(13)</sup>

Parties and dinners were in abundance. Reference has already been made to the one at which Hamilton Fyfe attended, and subsequently reported in the Daily Mail (3 Dec.1912), much to Houghton's annoyance (see p.141) and to the one given by Bouchier and his wife Violet Vanbrugh (see p.320). James Agate also recollected an event at the Hotel Metropole where Max Beerbohm had just dined with Houghton:

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11. Letter in Cade Collection.

12. To Monkhouse, 13 Jan.1913 (postmark) ANM 6.

13. Introduction, p.xviii.

*he [Houghton] leaned up against the mantelpiece, drank ... beer ... and talked to all of us with ... diffidence and ease, shyness and charm. (14)*

Beerbohm in fact caricatured Houghton in a sketch showing

*'Senior' dramatists: Barker, Masfield, Shaw, Galsworthy, Sutro, Pinero, Barrie, Jones and 'New Boy' Stanley Houghton. (15)*

Houghton also called several times to dine with Dodie Smith's family and was involved in the superstitious Christmas dinner of 1912 already referred to (see p.30).

On 4 November 1912 he travelled up to Liverpool to see Monkhouse's new play The Education of Mr. Surrage (1912) at The Liverpool Repertory Theatre. Dixon Scott recorded the event:

*I was there ... [and] on the right hand the author and his wife, and, on my left Stanley Houghton. We had a royal evening; a champagne dinner beforehand, we four; an oyster supper afterwards - [with] actors and actresses and professors and critics [including James Agate] and the rank and beauty of Liverpool, together with a smattering of the rank and file. (16)*

The play was a failure there:

*a success of esteem so far as the writing went, so far as the acting went - slow murder. Allan suffered inordinately but bore it with a smile and took his curtain without a blench. (17)*

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14. The Manchester Playgoer, Vol.2, No.1, p.25.
  15. A copy of the caricature is in The Works, Vol.2, facing title page. See also S. Rosenfeld and I.K. Fletcher, (Eds) Theatre Notebook : a quarterly journal of the History and technique of the British Theatre, Vol.20, 1968, p.102 and p.108. Beerbohm caricatured over sixty of the period's playwrights and authors.
  16. Quoted in Grace W. Goldie, The Liverpool Repertory Theatre 1911-1934, Hodder and Stoughton, 1935, p.81. An edited version also appears in M. McCrossan (Ed), The Letters of W. Dixon Scott, op.cit. p.219 (see also Ch.4, fn.123).
  17. Quoted by Grace W. Goldie, op.cit. pp.81-82 and also in The Letters of W. Dixon Scott, op.cit. p.219.

Of the total receipts of £217 (£5,642 in 1981) for the week Monkhouse received a fee of "a mere £10"<sup>(18)</sup> (£260 in 1981). However, the event did not end there. Houghton must have realised the play's potential, a potential highlighted by Edward Garnett twelve years later:

*Highly polished in style and dialogue ... which if not the finest is certainly the wittiest of [his] plays .... The greatest surprise of all is that this brilliant piece published ten years ago has only been acted a few times in the provinces. (19)*

Two days after the play's first performance Houghton wrote to Monkhouse that

*I have been talking to my agent Ernest Mayer ... and he asks me to ask you to let him look after your plays. I think that it would be very good if you could see your way to do so, for he is an excellent man with splendid connections. He is most intelligent, too. Do send him Mr. Surrage; he will enjoy it & will say whether he thinks there are commercial possibilities in it. I think there are. (20)*

Houghton was also a member of at least three prestigious Clubs. One was the Dramatists' Club - a club one joined by invitation only.<sup>(21)</sup> Because of this Club's importance, and in the absence of a single, unified reference text about it, it would be as well to consider briefly its history. On 20 March 1908 several members of the Society of Authors led a rebellion at its A.G.M. against the Dramatic Sub-Committee of the Society. Forty members had earlier held a meeting

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18. In Grace W. Goldie, op.cit. p.82.

19. 'The Work of Allan Monkhouse' in The Adelphi, Dec.1924, pp.1097-1099.

20. 6 Nov.1912, ANM 10.

21. See What I have had, op.cit. p.80.

to discuss the formation of an independent Dramatic Author's Society with Pinero as Chairman: on 3 March 1909 it was formed with the title Dramatists' Club.<sup>(22)</sup> G.B. Shaw, a prime mover in the affair, recalled its foundation meeting at the Criterion Restaurant, London on 17 March 1909:

*a clique of old strangers who insisted on excluding everyone who was not a dramatist of reputation"*  
(ibid. p.848)

Pinero gives an interesting insight into the way membership was actually obtained, a process Houghton must have gone through:

*The rule is, that a man shall be proposed at one meeting and that his claims shall be discussed and voted upon at the following meeting, and that in the meantime every member of the Club shall be notified that such-and-such a person has been nominated - the object of this rule being to remove the possibility of any man being elected without the consent, tacit or expressed, of the whole body of members.* (23)

Alfred Sutro, a founder member, noted that it was a gathering which met "*furthering the cause of the drama over a good meal*",<sup>(24)</sup> and was still going strong in 1933. By 1934, on Pinero's death, J.M. Barrie became its new President.<sup>(25)</sup> Lord Miles recollects dining with the Club, although he cannot recall the date.<sup>(26)</sup>

Houghton was so pleased with his membership that he wrote about his inaugural dinner to Monkhouse:

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22. Dean H. Laurence, (Ed), Bernard Shaw : Collected Letters 1898-1910, Reinhardt, 1972, pp.799-801.
  23. J.P. Wearing (Ed), The Collected Letters of Sir Arthur Pinero, University of Minnesota Press, 1974, p.224. See also pp.223-227; 235-238; 242; 262; 264 for more details.
  24. Celebrities and Simple Souls, op.cit. p.175.
  25. What I have had, op.cit. pp.81-2. Brighouse was later to become a member.
  26. Letter dated 16 April 1982.

*Today I lunched with the Dramatists' Club, a fortnightly eating Club of which I am a member, having just been invited to join. All the nuts are members. There were present H.A. Jones, Sydney Grundy, Anthony Hope, Haddon Chambers, A.E.W. Mason, Sutro, Bernard Shaw, R.C. Carton, Justin McCarthy, W.J. Locke and myself. Jones came round & taught me how to write plays. Sydney Grundy (27) cursed Manchester. (28)*

Another Club of which Houghton became a member was the O.P. Club, an offshoot of the Playgoer's Club which began in 1884.<sup>(29)</sup> Its origin, "with no purpose of profit or advertisement", was "to serve ... [and] infuse a healthy and independent tone into the discussions of affairs theatrical". Significantly, "the success ... was instant".<sup>(30)</sup>

The Club's initials have never been fully explained save to say that they are "crisp and easily remembered".<sup>(31)</sup> The most obvious one, however, is the theatrical location on stage of being opposite the prompter's side (O.P.). The Club's list of functions and names is impressive (notably in 1903, it granted ladies the same rights as men in membership): Lena Ashwell, Granville Barker, Arthur Bouchier, Henry Irving, Ellen Terry, Violet Vanbrugh were all regular and popular guests. On 20 October 1912 "a well conceived and extremely popular fixture" was presided over by the new President, Lord Howard de Walden (whom Houghton had met earlier: see p.162). It was the

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27. Grundy (1848-1914) had been a barrister in his native City of Manchester: See O.C.T. p.419.
28. 6 Nov.1912, ANM 10. See also Introduction, p.xvii. Other members were, according to Sutro, Celebrities and Simple Souls, op.cit. p.175 and p.180: J.M. Barrie; H.H. Davies; W.S. Gilbert; H. James; R. Marshall; W.S. Maugham.
29. The O.P. Club: 1900-21 - The Coming of Age, privately printed 1921, p.8. Copy in the British Library: ref. 11795 dd.21.
30. *ibid.* pp.8-9.
31. *ibid.* p.10.



'Milestones Dinner' to celebrate the play of the same name by Edward Knoblock (sometimes spelled Knoblauch)<sup>(32)</sup> and Arnold Bennett. Houghton knew Knoblock (of whom more will be said later) and may well have been amongst the 400 guests.<sup>(33)</sup> On 12 January 1913 Houghton was definitely present as guest of honour for the 'Dialect Drama Dinner'<sup>(34)</sup> at the Hotel Cecil.<sup>(35)</sup> In March 1914 the Club officially lamented his death.<sup>(36)</sup>

On 25 February 1913 Houghton was elected to the Savage Club,<sup>(37)</sup> the "*premier literary club*".<sup>(38)</sup> He was proposed by Cyril Hogg and seconded by Donald Calthrop and Stanley Austin. Hogg was not only a playwright<sup>(39)</sup> but also the head of Samuel French Ltd. until his death in 1964.<sup>(40)</sup> He became a friend of Houghton's, witnessed Houghton's signing his will and attended his funeral (see p.397). Calthrop (1888-1940) was an actor and the nephew of Dion Boucicault.<sup>(41)</sup>

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32. See O.C.T. p.538.

33. The Times, 21 Oct.1912, p.11 reported the event. Some guests are listed but not Houghton.

34. The O.P. Club: 1900-21, op.cit. p.21.

35. The Times, 14 Jan. 1913, p.8.

36. Manchester Courier, 30 March, H.C. Vol.M. : London Letter Column.

37. Letter from Honorary Secretary, 19 Fitzmaurice Place, Berkeley Square., 19 Oct 1981. Facts taken from the Minutes Book. Brighouse erroneously gives the date as 1912 (Introduction, p.xvii).

38. S.J. Kunitz and H. Haycroft, (Eds), Twentieth Century Authors, op.cit. p.669.

39. A. Nicoll, English Drama 1900-1930, op.cit. p.728.

40. Confirmed by French in a letter 16 Nov.1981.

41. Who Was Who in the Theatre 1912-76, Vol.1. op.cit. p.362.

Unfortunately, it has proved impossible to find any information at all on Austin.

The Club's history is interesting, its attraction for Houghton being its "*lack of pomp*".<sup>(42)</sup> Initially none of its members had any means of living, other than by "*their brains*".<sup>(43)</sup> Indeed, "*the men thus banded together glorified a little ostentatiously in their bohemianism*". (ibid.). By the time Houghton had joined the membership had extended to Princes, Ambassadors and Bishops: "*sufficiently select, well-to-do and decorous society*". (ibid.). In June 1912 Miss Horniman had been a guest of honour at one of its functions.<sup>(44)</sup> Gilbert Cannan, Houghton's friend, had been a member since February 1911, having been proposed by Alfred Sutro.<sup>(45)</sup>

Finally, it may be as well to mention that, according to Dixon Scott, Houghton had also received an invitation to dine at the Lyceum Club,<sup>(46)</sup> membership of which was granted for, "*original contributions in the shape of books or articles, or some achievement in painting or statuary*". Indeed, these could "*alone secure membership*".<sup>(47)</sup>

Of all the society dinners and parties that Houghton attended none were perhaps as grand as those offered by one lady in particular: Lady St. Helier. (c.1850-1931). Houghton briefly mentioned one forthcoming

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42. Introduction, p.xvii.

43. T.H.S. Escott, Club Makers and Club Members, Fisher Unwin, 1914, p.271.

44. Daily Telegraph, 10 June, H.C. Vol.I.

45. Diana Farr, Gilbert Cannan : a Georgian Prodigy, op.cit. p.78.

46. Letter to Monkhouse, 13 January 1913 (postmark) ANM 6.

47. T.H.S. Escott, op.cit. p.318.

event to Monkhouse:

*On Wednesday I dine with Lady St. Helier, rather better known as Lady Jeune. She ought to be interesting.* (48)

There is no known record of the dinner but Lady St. Helier's reputation certainly provides an indication as she was "*famed for her brilliant art of entertaining.*" (49)

Cyril Maude recollected a party she once gave:

*all the world and his wife were there! ... all along the street [Harley Street] from the door of Lady Jeune's house, the linkmen were calling the names of various Dukes and Duchesses who were wanting their carriages, which quickly rolled up with powdered coachmen and footmen.* (50)

Irene Vanbrugh, the actress sister of Bouchier's wife, also recollected a visit she paid to Lady St. Helier "*in her country house and H.R.H. Princess Christian was the guest of honour.*" (51) John Galsworthy was a friend and listed her amongst a group of people with whom he mostly associated: "*Asquith, Balfour, Sidney Webb, Lloyd George, Gladstone, Pinero and Lady St. Helier.*" (52)

Such was Houghton's social life in the latter half of 1912, but he soon began to grow tired of it:

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48. 3 Dec.1912, ANM 12.

49. Who Was Who 1929-1940, Vol.3, Black, 1941, p.1187.

50. Behind the Scenes with Cyril Maude by Himself, op.cit. p.202.

51. To Tell My Story, Hutchinson, 1949, p.58. She was married to Dion Boucicault (see p.348 supra).

52. Catherine Dupré, John Galsworthy : a biography, op.cit. p.135.

*the whirl for a time amused him, but it did not satisfy  
.... he tired quickly of a life lived so much in the  
limelight.* (53)

Indeed, his view of London changed dramatically: "*the most detestable place in the world*". (54) Perhaps James Agate caught his mood accurately:

*He spoke of his immediate work as if it had been hung up by town, and as though he disliked the great City for it. He had not, I thought, much awe and reverence for London; he seemed to resent it .... London was no stimulus to Houghton; he had exchanged a world he knew intimately for one he knew not at all .... The insolence of life in London, its luxury and ease, its squalor and romance, the every-day imminence of unheard-of happenings made little appeal to him.* (55)

His flight to Paris was not just a romantic dash. Bearing in mind his keen interest in the French language, it was a long held ambition: "*A flat in Paris was a dream of his Manchester days*". (56) Just what part his alleged homosexuality had to play in the emigration is difficult to assess but it may well have had some influence. It was also to be his opportunity to break away from drama and begin in earnest his efforts on a novel. (see Ch.11.).

Brighouse stated that Houghton, "*after a Christmas visit to Manchester, fled early in 1913 to Paris*". (57) He had, in fact, been there several months earlier to reconnoitre the place. On 26 September 1912 he wrote an interesting letter to Monkhouse announcing

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53. Introduction, pp.XVIII-XIX.

54. Letter to Brighouse in What I have had, op.cit. p.179.

55. The Manchester Playgoer, Vol.2, No.1, pp.24-25.

56. Introduction, p.xix.

57. *ibid.*

*You find me here, inhabiting the flat belonging to Lady Gordon (Lucile Ltd) of "Titanic" fame. She has gone to New York & has lent it to Clark [sic], who is still in London. I have moved in here tonight after spending three nights in a Paris hotel. I don't know when he is coming back; he has been called to London on business. (58)*

Clarke was of course Houghton's flat mate at Burleigh Mansions (see p.343). Lady Duff Gordon (1863-1939) was not only "the first English-woman to become internationally famous as a dress designer" (59) but also "the most dramatic personality among the London dressmakers and one who left a series of landmarks in the growth of fashion ... an outstanding innovator". (60) She had salons in London, Paris and New York. Lucile was her Christian name which she later adopted as her trade mark. (61) Her connection with the Titanic need not be gone into here but it proved to be a long and bitter struggle involving claims that the lifeboat she and her husband boarded was ordered to sail at his instigation with some twenty-eight spare places. (62) Clarke was at this time one of her assistant designers. (63) Apart from her business she was also very keen on the theatre, being a personal acquaintance of Ellen Terry and Sarah Bernhardt. She had also met

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- 58. ANM 10. Address given as "C/o Gilbert Clark, 5 Rue Maurepas, Versailles.
  - 59. A. Adburgham, Shops and Shopping 1800-1914, op.cit. p.245.
  - 60. Elizabeth Ewing, History of Twentieth Century Fashion, op.cit. p.28. She was highly praised by Cecil Beaton (p.30).
  - 61. Lady Duff Gordon, Discretions and Indiscretions, Jarrolds, 1932 p.41. Her sister was the novelist Elinor Glyn (1864-1944): See Anthony Glyn, Elinor Glyn : a biography, Hutchinson, 1968 (revised). Both were close friends of Lady Jeune: (Elinor Glyn : p.95).
  - 62. See The Manchester Guardian, 18 May 1912, pp.8 and 11, and 21 May, p.9. for a full coverage of the inquiry. See also her autobiography, op.cit. pp.147 ff.
  - 63. Discretions and Indiscretions, op.cit. p.214.

Oscar Wilde (in the 1880's).<sup>(64)</sup> Significantly she "used to keep an open house for all my friends" (ibid. p.196), especially

*in Paris ... I had gathered round me all the people whose society I liked best of all, people who did things, artists, writers, sculptors, musicians.*

(ibid. p.199)

This perhaps explains Clarke's ability to allow Houghton to remain alone in the flat.

Houghton liked the flat:

*This seems a good place to work in. Absolutely quiet: looking out onto the Park of Versailles. Just far enough from Paris to make it hardly worthwhile to go in. I feel as if I shall stay here a month, if he'll have me, and write a play.* (65)

That he was getting to know the area with a view to taking up permanent residence is beyond doubt:

*I have spent the three days making an acquaintance with Paris. I have now a rough but surprisingly useful acquaintance with the underground, the buses, trams and steamers, etc. and the main streets.*

His way of spending his time is interesting:

*I have not been inside anything except a restaurant or two; the Palais Royal Theatre, and the Louvre, where I had enough furniture & pictures in two hours this morning to last a long time; and I didn't go thro' a quarter of it.*

He then went on to mention another friend:

*I lunched with Edward Knoblauch [i.e. Knoblock] yesterday at his flat near the Palais Royal; an old apartment fitted up sumptuously and tastefully. He showed me a bit round Paris afterwards, and we spent a long time in the appalling Magasins Du Louvre (a glorified Lewis's) where he was buying household requisites.*

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64. Discretions and Indiscretions, op.cit. pp.32, 201, and 38 respectively.

65. Letter to Monkhouse, 26 Sept.1912, ANM 10.

Knoblock's flat had in fact been decorated by the artist William Nicholson,<sup>(66)</sup> who along with James Pryde, had become famous as the 'Beggartaff Brothers'. Nicholson's biographer recounted the commission to decorate the flat:

*William stayed in Knoblock's flat, and worked out an elaborate scheme to be painted on glass, and set in a frame like that of a large-paned window, which was to be fitted to the walls.*<sup>(67)</sup>

In the same work is an account of a riotous party attended by Nicholson dressed up in some of Knoblock's drama costumes and props (p.116). The incident was later to be painted by the artist. Whether Houghton was present or not is unknown but he certainly met both artists along with Knoblock in Paris in May 1913.<sup>(68)</sup> Nicholson and Pryde were favourite artist amongst theatrical managers<sup>(69)</sup> having a keen interest in the theatre anyhow. Many famous names commissioned them to do work e.g. Henry Irving, Ellen Terry.<sup>(70)</sup> Pryde, later in 1921, took the Chair "at a Savage Club dinner",<sup>(71)</sup> Houghton's old Club.

Eventually Houghton found his own flat at 6 Rue Bobillot, Place d'Italie, Paris.<sup>(72)</sup> The building still stands (in 1983) but the exact date of occupation has not been possible to establish. However, in a letter to Basil Dean dated 30 April 1913 one finds a postscript saying,

*I am living here now. Look me up when you are here.*<sup>(73)</sup>

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66. Edward Knoblock, Round the Room, Chapman and Hall, 1939, p.164.

67. Marguerite Steen, William Nicholson, Collins, 1943, p.116.

68. Introduction, p.xix.

69. See O.C.T. p.215.

70. Derek Hudson, James Pryde 1866-1941, Constable, 1949, p.26.

71. *ibid.* p.79. A Beerbohm caricature of the painters appears in the above book.

72. Address on letters in ANM Collection.

73. Letter in Dean Collection.

Also Houghton had informed The Manchester Guardian that as from 1 May 1913 his new address would be as above.<sup>(74)</sup> Interestingly, and just to digress for a moment, one finds in that letter to Dean above an example of Houghton's ability to console somebody. The context is unknown but seems to have been written in response to an initial letter from Dean in which he may have confided in Houghton that he was worried about rumours concerning his future in the theatre:

*It is no good worrying about this sort of thing.  
People like you - and even me - get talked about and  
have to put up with it. You may be glad it is nothing  
worse than this; for as a rule I find that if there is  
nothing bad to be said about one, people will invent  
something very scandalous.*

Unfortunately for Houghton he fell ill and before being able to furnish his flat; he had to leave to recuperate at "his loved St. Brelade's Bay, Jersey".<sup>(75)</sup> There he became very depressed but soon recovered and returned to Paris where he "enjoyed hugely his furnishing expeditions, was in better health, and wrote optimistic letters".<sup>(76)</sup> By 24 May 1913 he was able to tell Monkhouse that he had

*got nicely settled now; it has taken me a month to do it  
and all I lack now is an umbrella-stand and three nocturnes  
for my bedroom which are being framed. It is the dearest  
little flat; three rooms, a kitchen & the usual offices,  
and lovely balcony.*<sup>(77)</sup>

His flat was on the sixth floor.<sup>(78)</sup>

Further evidence of his life in the flat is to be found in a letter

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74. See Index to Literary Contributions, op.cit. Vol.388/9, p.525.

75. Introduction, p.xix.

76. Introduction, p.xix.

77. Letter in ANM 10.

78. Introduction, p.xix.



he wrote and which Brighthouse has included in his Introduction (pp.xix-xxi). He stated that he rose at eight and after the usual ablution prepared his chocolate drink. His maid would arrive at nine and he would retreat to work in his study for some three hours. Lunch would be in his dining room (*"She does excellent light lunches"*) followed by coffee, and liqueur and *"a rest on the balcony"*. He would then resume work until about four o'clock when he would either have tea, go for a walk, or see some one and possibly have tea with them. In the evening he usually dined out, about *"a mile and a half away"* at some restaurant on the corner of the Boulevard du Montparnasse and Boulevard Raspail, *"where there are two or three good and cheap places"*. Sometimes he would remain in the Place d'Italie. Travel would generally be on foot unless it rained when he would take the Metro or a tram. After dinner he would either go on to a cafe or a studio if in company, returning home *"very late"*. Otherwise it was home early.<sup>(79)</sup> However, he was keen to make sure that the wrong impression was not given:

*This sounds as if I know lots of people. I don't, but there is a little group of four or five, American girl artists and Englishmen, and then a young German, and one can ring the changes.*

Yet one does get the impression that he was nearly as active socially as he had been in London. In a letter to Monkhouse, for example, he mentioned that he would call to see him at his hotel in Paris (Monkhouse being on holiday there at the time)<sup>(80)</sup> *"but don't wait in if you have an engagement as it is not absolutely certain I'll be*

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79. Knoblock in Round the Room op.cit. pp.162 and 164 remembers how living there at that time was not only cheap but that it was also *"a haven of quiet"*.

80. As mentioned earlier Monkhouse had intended a visit and had invited Dixon Scott to go along with him (see Ch.4. p.143).

there".<sup>(81)</sup> Moreover,

*I have had a jolly weekend. Monet lives at Giverny, in a lovely garden; although he wasn't at our party his daughter & grandson were; and we saw him walking in his garden. He saw us; but we had the advantage of him, since we knew who he was!"*

On balance it would seem that Houghton had struck a better compromise between work and leisure than was the case in London:

*My place here is admirably chosen; it is just enough out of the way to prevent people dropping in on the chance of finding me at home. Really, this is the first time I have found peace since I left Manchester, and the proof is that I want to work and am actually doing so, even in spite of the time taken up by my domestic affairs.*<sup>(82)</sup>

Yet despite this apparent equanimity one can sense a longing, perhaps a loneliness within Houghton - a lack of emotional security. This may have been symptomatic of his illness. For example, one finds him humorously bidding Brighthouse to visit him in Paris:

*The flat contains a spare room which you are bidden to occupy.*<sup>(83)</sup>

More revealing though is a letter to Monkhouse urging him to come over to Paris:<sup>(84)</sup>

*I wish you could see it. Don't you think you could come over & stay with me for a few days? My visiting list ahead is very meagre. I've a man coming about the middle of June & that seems to be all. Cut the Exchange & dash over here next week. I can give you a nice room with a bed of monastic austerity, which made Payne laugh yesterday - he called it a Tolstoyan bed. For Payne has been here*

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81. n.d., ANM 12. However, a combination of references to rehearsals at the Apollo for The Perfect Cure (see p.206) and the reply of Dixon Scott's in fn.80 above place it between 2-17 June 1913.

82. Introduction, p.xx.

83. What I have had, op.cit. p.179.

84. I have already quoted most of this letter in Ch.4., p.143. Its inclusion again, however, is warranted.

*for three or four days staying not with me, but with another man. You could even work if you want to dash off a play in the time. You should have a room where you might be quite secluded for as much of the day as you wanted. You may wonder where I find all these rooms, since I have only three but I'd show you if you came. I should work too if you did.*

Indeed this letter did begin with the words,

*It isn't very long since I saw you, but it seems a long time because such a lot of things have happened in it. Of course I keep hearing you talk in your leaders & notices & reviews; for the M.G. comes every day.*

Moreover,

*I should like just to have a note every now and then. And about one book to review about every four months - an interesting one - to show I haven't given up the paper. I'd pay the extra postage! (85)*

Such was Houghton's life in London and Paris for a year from the Summer of 1912. During the following summer his health deteriorated rapidly and he was admitted to a hospital in Venice as an emergency case. He never fully recovered from that latest attack and died later in the year. He wrote no more plays from about June 1913 although he had begun work on a novel. It would, therefore, be appropriate to consider this new venture before looking at the final months of his life. This then will be the subject of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### THE PROSE WORKS OF STANLEY HOUGHTON

#### 1. ESSAYS, SKETCHES AND SHORT STORIES

#### 2. LIFE: A NOVEL (UNFINISHED)

#### 1. ESSAYS, SKETCHES AND SHORT STORIES

Houghton wrote much prose during his short life. Apart from the vast output of critical reviews and miscellaneous articles he wrote for the Manchester City News and The Manchester Guardian he also wrote several essays, sketches, short stories and the first six chapters of a novel.

Brighouse collected twelve such prose pieces for publication in The Works (Vol.3). There are, however, three more in existence, one of which has just come to light. Of these fifteen, nine were printed in The Manchester Guardian between 1909 and 1913 (see Appendices 1 and 3), one in the 1909 Gaiety Theatre Christmas Annual,<sup>(1)</sup> four in The Works and the one recently found probably in the Sheffield Telegraph (see below). Of the ones in The Works Brighouse noted that Houghton *"working through the simpler medium [with] an outlook more mature than that which found expression in his play [exemplified] a stronger purpose and a deeper vision"* that would eventually have found its way into his future plays had he lived. Brighouse believed that Houghton's mind *"unhampered by the limitations of the stage here shot ahead"*.<sup>(2)</sup>

As in his plays it is the individual, either in isolation or as a group member, who is the centre of interest. Such interest in people for

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1. The Workings of Providence, pp.88-100. This story has been discussed in Ch.6, p.174.

2. Introduction, p.xxxviii.

Houghton began early. At school, apart from writing a story "*after the manner of 'Treasure Island'*", he also wrote, during an illness which kept him off school, "*a daily paper in which the visits of the butcher, baker and greengrocer were recorded and daily commented on*".<sup>(3)</sup> Moving on to what is now his first extant short story (probably written about 1902) entitled A Hazard for a Fortune<sup>(4)</sup> one finds a piece of about 5,000 words in length divided into three chapters. It seems to have been intended for the Sheffield Weekly Telegraph (the Saturday supplement of The Sheffield Telegraph) but research has failed to locate it. This fact stems from a piece of scrap paper found between the pages of the unpublished and previously unknown play Adam Moss : Bachelor with the following words on it:

*T. of T. Woman's Life.*

*Haz. for fortune. Sheff. W. Teleg.*

*Dying Lie.*

These words are in Houghton's hand and are written in black ink, as is the play which I have argued elsewhere (see p.38.) as being approximately 1902. Houghton, it will be recalled, wrote by hand until 1911.<sup>(5)</sup> The titles on the left-hand side are Houghton's articles and those on the right the intended places of publication. The first has not been solved nor traced. The third must be The Dying Lie found in The Works (Vol.3., pp.199-206). Interestingly, A Hazard for a Fortune is a typed script but in black; Houghton, when he began typing from 1911, used light blue ribbon. Moreover, the script bears slight corrections in black by Houghton himself. It would seem therefore that this was

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3. Letter written by C.P. Clarke of Wilmslow College, Cheshire, to The Manchester Guardian, 12 Dec.1913, p.11. See also Ch.1. p.10.

4. This story has only recently emerged. It is now in the Stanley Houghton Collection.

5. Introduction, p.x1.

a proof copy with the strong possibility of it having been written about 1902.

Its style is certainly immature when compared with his later prose writings. It tells the story of two cousins living together and one accidentally discovering that the other is to inherit a very large fortune. He plots to have this cousin kidnapped and held to ransom. A friend is hired to do it but turns out to be the brother of the girl the intended victim is to marry. She eventually foils the attempt and the story ends with the villains accidentally drowning. It is a predictable, simplistic story and has all the marks of a beginner. At times it recalls the style of Mark Twain. Indeed, in the story there is a reference (p.20) to an Artemus Ward tale in which, *"the captive, who, after being imprisoned for seven years, suddenly thought of opening the window and getting out"*. Ward, the pseudonym of C.F. Browne (1834-67), an American humorous moralist, created a style which is generally held to have been part of a tradition from which Mark Twain evolved his own style. The Dying Lie, however, is slightly different. It is almost as melodramatic and contrived, but it does have several well written paragraphs of description, making use of metaphors and similes in that original manner that was shortly to characterize his journalistic criticisms (see p.116).

The other three prose pieces which Brighouse has grouped under the heading of 'Short Stories' are better in many respects and whilst no date is attached to them they would appear to be later than the above two but not by many years. They indicate a greater degree of development, of maturity, doubtless gained from his experience as a playwright and critic which was now developing at a rather faster pace

than before. The Time of His Life (Vol.3, pp.207-214) is a well written account of a man who until his embezzlement was shy and withdrawn and who longed for "the experience" that money could buy. Ironically, the spending spree turned out to be the exact opposite and he was put in embarrassing, awkward situations, spending most of the time in dread of being caught. His invitation from the prostitute provides a clever anticlimax:

*"Aren't you coming, dear?" she asked plaintively. He said "Yes", and did not move".*

(Vol.3, p.214)

Grey (pp.215-219) is an altogether better piece in many respects.

James Agate, in fact, placed it (along with Hawthorn Lodge and the play Hindle Wakes) amongst "all the absolutely first-class work done by him".<sup>(6)</sup>

Its style is almost poetic in its recollection of a man's life from what it might have been to what it was: the bright, cheerfully written paragraphs of boyhood dreams contrasts effectively with the slow, ponderous, almost mourning diction of the rest. Agate said of it: "it reveals a wistfulness, a delicacy of emotion that was rare in the artist and well-known in the man". (ibid. p.27).

The final story in this group, Revolt of Mr. Reddy (Vol.3, pp.220-226) is almost an amalgamation of the previous three. Mr. Reddy's mundane life is suddenly interrupted:

*Mr. Reddy's behaviour on the day we have in view was ... inexplicable. It was a purple patch in his career, and on the white flower of a blameless life a purple patch shows up with an effect exotic and altogether remarkable.*

(p.222)

This time the dull, uninteresting life is relieved in one evening of drink, tom-foolery and sheer escapism. Despite being reprehended by

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6. The Manchester Playgoer, op.cit. p.25.

his employer and being fined for being drunk and disorderly, all turns out well and Mr. Reddy returns to work a happier, contented man. The story is undoubtedly the most rounded and complete so far, with no trace of melodrama. Its humour, understated as it is, provides a witty tale.

The final group of prose works were purposely written with one objective in mind: printing as back-page articles in The Manchester Guardian. One sees in them the results of his 'apprenticeship' with that newspaper. He had to achieve a high level of competence because *"the back-page article ... [had] become one of the standing targets of literary craftsmanship."*<sup>(7)</sup> Indeed, Howard Spring recalled that, *"the ambition of all proper young men on the 'Manchester Guardian' was to write that first column on the last page"*.<sup>(8)</sup> Houghton had a total of nine printed, the first of which was Mr. Ovens (28 October 1909, p.14, and Vol.3, p.157). It is a tersely written story about the loneliness and eventual death of a man much neglected by his family. It is reminiscent of the previously mentioned Grey but with the story being one of recollection rather than of anticipation. It is a carefully rounded piece with the opening snippet of overheard conversation only being finally resolved in the final lines. Out of the Season appeared on 3 May 1910 (p.14 and Vol.3, p.161) by which time Houghton had already reviewed some fourteen novels for The Manchester Guardian as well as writing the reviews of some ninety-three plays plus the composition of his professional plays The Dear Departed, Independent Means, Marriages

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7. See Ch.4, p.106 for a fuller discussion. He received the standard fee of £2.2.0 ( £58.80 in 1981) for each story.

8. The Autobiography of Howard Spring, Collins, 1972, p.139.



in the Making, The Younger Generation, The Master of the House, and a part of Ginger. The experience gained is seen in the improved quality of this latter story. Its opening paragraph is belletristic in its composition with its similes quickly being extended into metaphors:

*The promenade lay like a curved sword with the light on it. The shimmer of steel gleamed from the wet asphalt as the curtain of cloud parted from the horizon, and let a little paleness pass across the stretch of sea. Mist hung above the sea like steam, in patches; and from where the sun should have shown the rain pattered undecidedly, like the half-hearted fusillade of beaten sharpshooters. The drops lashed impudently the faces of great piles of pleasure palaces, which seemed to stare blankly from a thousand eyes as they meekly awaited the golden days when the crush of counties would flow through their corridors like life-blood, warming and awakening them to other than mute suffering. The sea front, noble in the length and regularity of its sweep, where for joyous miles thousands jostle in the sunshine, was populous only with a grove of tramway standards; and along the shining rails, at long intervals, slid furtively an electric car, almost the only living thing upon that vast expanse. (Vol.3, p.161)*

The story's title is indeed a metaphor for life itself: it concerns two separate, retired men in search of something concrete in life or at least what is left of it for them.

28 June 1910 saw Other People's Houses (p.16 and Vol.3, p.166) a story The Manchester Guardian eventually saw as having "a humane beauty that we cannot find in the plays".<sup>(9)</sup> What is interesting about this particular sketch is that it is built around a game, an exercise of the imagination. It is, in fact, almost a summary of Houghton's capabilities: the ability to see beyond the walls into the lives of people. One only need recall the Ernest Marriott caricature of Houghton on the rooftop with his ear finely tuned to the chimney pot with the caption: "Mr. Stanley Houghton nocturnally overhearing a

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9. 11 Dec.1913, p.16: Houghton's obituary notice.

*fireside conversation in Suburbia*" (see p.33 ). Reference is made in the story to Ibsen's The Master Builder and such a reference is pertinent to any study of Houghton: he was Ibsen without the poetry according to William Archer (Introduction, p.xliv). The theme, even here, is the inherent loneliness of the individual, particularly in old age, and also the insularity of people despite being part of a society.

In his next story one finds him actually taking up the idea of the previous one in his piece Hawthorn Lodge, printed on 17 January 1911, (p.14 and Vol.3, p.171). Houghton obviously had a particular liking for this story because he intended to develop it fully at a later date as seen in this note:

*For a novel: Framework of my article 'Hawthorn Lodge',  
with the house getting bigger as the family disperses.  
Title, 'Home'. (10)*

The story is ironic in that it concerns the development of the house in order to ease the problems of overcrowding. Indeed, Houghton writes in parts with the eye of a draughtsman, an ability in him praised by Brighouse.<sup>(11)</sup> However, the extensions parallel the demise of the family with the final sentence almost being black humour:

*Mrs. Piper, I remember, always wanted to have the electric  
light put in .... As soon as she is dead Mr. Piper, I  
suppose, will make a point of seeing that it is done.*

(p.175)

Two Breton Tales are different from the rest in that they are translations by Houghton from Anatole Le Braz's book La Légende de la Mort Chez les Bretons-Armoricains (1893)<sup>(12)</sup> which deals with French folklore and

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10. Introduction, p.xxi.

11. *ibid.* p.xiii.

12. First published (2 vols) in Paris 1893; Second edit. 1902;  
third 1912; fourth 1923.

mythology. The two he translated were about supernatural happenings at sea: A bord de la 'Jeune Mathilde' (pp.420-423) and La Ville d'Is (pp.429-432).<sup>(13)</sup> Brighthouse makes no reference to them. They were printed together in The Manchester Guardian on 21 April 1911 (p.14).

Fritz's appeared on 12 May 1911 (p.14 and Vol.3, p.176). It has that same kind of opening paragraph that characterised Out of the Season. Dixon Scott saw the former as "*ostensibly only a circumstantial street-scene [but] where the ... delighted sense of ordinary life as a sort of fairy-tale [kept on] freshening and fascinating*" Houghton.<sup>(14)</sup>

However, there is something very curious about page 177 of the story: it is almost identical to pages 215-216 of Grey: Houghton has merely transferred the passage from one story to the other. Interestingly, however, it blends in with both perfectly: one reinforces the character Johnny whilst the other reinforces the setting of the cafe.

Anniversaries and Old Letters was printed on 8 November 1911 (p.16 and Vol.3, p.181). Brighthouse records that the Beerbohm caricature of Arnold Bennett alluded to on pp.182-3 was eventually purchased by Houghton.<sup>(15)</sup> This cleverly written piece deals with the quaint yet engrossing habit of an old lady's ability to recollect past family events and the apparent<sup>u</sup> interest shown by the younger cousin.

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13. Page references are from the 1923 edition. Interestingly Synge, who had been compared with Houghton in some respects, was equally as interested in Le Braz's book. In 1897 he attended a lecture by him and after holding a discussion with Le Braz read carefully the above text before writing an essay on him which appeared in the Dublin edition of The Daily Express, 28 Jan.1899. See D.H. Greene and E.M. Stephens, J.M. Synge 1871-1909, Macmillan, 1959, pp.64-65. \* see p. 270.

14. Men of Letters, op.cit. p.174.

15. Introduction, p.xxxviii.

Hanover House as a title for his penultimate submission to The Manchester Guardian (17 May 1912, p.16 and Vol.3, p.186) has an interesting story attached to it: Houghton never gave it that title. He complained bitterly to Monkhouse that

*Some whippersnapper on the 'M.G.' has had the impudence to alter the title of a back-pager I had in last week. I called it CHAINS and it comes out HANOVER HOUSE, like a genealogical table of the Royal Family. It is really most irritating, the assumption of serene superiority by some of the young lions. I feel like complaining strongly. Perhaps that wouldn't be the thing, but why don't they give you a chance of protesting beforehand by sending you a proof. I asked for one specially. (16)*

Indeed, a close look at the story does indicate that the new title is inappropriate since it gives no indication of the story's theme: the metaphorical chaining of Mrs. Hallways to her home. Despite the fact that her grown-up children live in various parts of the World and often send her invitations she declines:

*It's not that I wouldn't give anything to see the children again ... that's all I've left to hope for. But I couldn't think of leaving the house! (p.190)*

Whoever altered the title merely took the name of Mrs. Hallways' dwelling from the opening page (line 4 : Hanover House) despite the fact that the diction on that page clearly indicates the theme of incarceration, (almost agoraphobic):

*fortunately the old stout red-brick garden wall is high enough to keep them [other houses] out of sight.*

and,

*these invaders without her gates*

and,

*it [the garden] is wide enough on all sides, however, to keep the world at arm's length, and to preserve the house - that inner citadel of peace. (p.186)*

Houghton's final back-page article appeared on 28 April 1913 (p.16 and Vol.3, p.191) only this time his name also appeared in the contents' column (p.8), a feature almost unique in the paper up to 1913 at least. Dixon Scott noticed in this story, The Teashop, the influence of both George Moore and Arnold Bennett in what he termed a "*little crepuscular prose-impression*".<sup>(17)</sup> What is interesting about this particular story is its anticipation of Houghton's novel which also has traces of Moore and Bennett (see below). Meanwhile, this story, like his others, deals with a longing. The protagonist is female and along with two other women

*They, like the young woman, seem to be waiting ....  
They are waiting for Life to come to them like a tide  
and sweep them out of this backwater. (p.193)*

Life is in fact the title given by Houghton to his novel. Furthermore, a leitmotif established in the novel's first six chapters is almost summed up here:

*There is a great deal of pleasure to be had by fitting  
one's mood to the situation one is in. After all,  
that is the secret of happiness. (pp.193-94)*

The short story, however, ends on a note of despair and despondency.

These prose works are an essential ingredient in any study of Houghton for two reasons. Firstly they highlight that belief prevalent at his death and commented upon by Brighouse:

*one notes ... an outlook more mature than that which found  
expression in his plays. His mind, unhampered by the  
limitations of the stage, here shot ahead; and it is upon  
these articles, considered in conjunction with the marked  
change which, in the last year of his life, took place in  
the man himself, that one bases with confidence the assertion  
that the unwritten plays of his future would have revealed  
a stronger purpose and a deeper vision. (Introduction, p.xxxviii)*

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17. Men of Letters, op.cit. p.173.

That this would have been the case remains, of course, speculative yet probable; his development over twelve or so years had been vast and yet he was still only thirty-two years of age. However, it is to the second reason that one must look. Brighthouse may have been right but only partially. Rather than predict future greatness in plays, it is my contention that Houghton was seriously considering the novel as his next step in literature - not in complete isolation from drama but certainly as the dominant genre. Dixon Scott came very close to noting this change. He saw this step as *"the crucial one .... represented ... by a series of ... back-pagers"* (op.cit. p.173). In them Houghton, as noted above, found a freedom, a choice no longer conditioned by the constraints of the theatre, a medium he was able to adapt to express things he wanted to say. This is not in any way to detract from his plays which certainly have their merits. What prose allowed Houghton to do was to express other aspects of life from a more personal viewpoint and in a manner befitting them; the humour employed in the plays was not appropriate here. Whilst disagreeing with Dixon Scott's view that his prose, when compared with his drama, was necessarily better in that *"in order to speak with his own voice he had to cease using the lips of marionettes and actors"*,<sup>(18)</sup> I do agree with his succinct analysis of Houghton's prose works:

*There is a great deal of beauty here - not verbal beauty only, silken phrases and soft refrains, but a charming tenderness of touch in dealing with mortal relationships, a constant, chivalrous, engrossed and diffident care for fine discriminations and delicate truths. And the prose is everywhere eager to dwell on what, in one of his own earlier articles, he had called the "beautiful strangeness" of life. (op.cit. p.174).*

Such a summary prepares one for Houghton's novel as indeed Houghton's short stories prepared him to undertake that longer, more sustained

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18. Men of Letters, op.cit. p.176.

genre: a novel about an individual's quest for life.

## 2. LIFE : A NOVEL (UNFINISHED)

The desire to write novels must have been with Houghton for some time. When success at its greatest came with Hindle Wakes, Houghton, rather than capitalise on it, tended to turn away from drama. The earliest known reference to such an idea was given to Brighouse:

*I want to do a fine play but the knowledge that, no matter how fine it may be, asses of critics will persist in refusing to believe it half as good as 'Hindle Wakes' paralyses me. I think, after all, I have exhausted the stage. I wonder whether I could make as big a sensation with a novel. A pleasant, humdrum thing to sit down to every morning, a novel; it all goes in with the mass, whereas a false step may ruin a play. (19)*

This almost cynical, despondent reaction seems to have produced results immediately. By January 1913 Dixon Scott was able to tell Monkhouse that on a visit to see Houghton he saw "the opening chapters of (bless the boy) a Novel".<sup>(20)</sup> By 24 May in the same year Houghton revealed to Monkhouse, apparently for the first time, his intentions:

*I have begun to do something. It is, I tremble to tell you, a novel. I have already done about 45 pp of 250 words each - say 11,000 and 12,000 words. I wonder how much more I require. I have much more pressing things to do really; two plays, but I feel more disposed towards the novel, & so very uncommercially I am hanging up the plays. (21)*

The novel managed to progress eventually to some 22,000 words. At the above time he must have just reached Chapter 4. The succeeding three

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19. What I have had, op.cit. p.179. Undated but must be late 1912.

20. 13 January (postmark), ANM 6.

21. ANM 10.

chapters must have followed on fairly quickly because by July he was in hospital in Venice and indeed much had happened to keep him busy between May and July 1913 anyway.

Dixon Scott, yet again, offers another view which is of interest.

He maintained that Houghton's preoccupation had by Hindle Wakes been satisfied in that

*the romance of the stage ... had mainly attracted Houghton at first; he had now begun to turn towards the romance of real life. His interest had shifted from the people sitting inside the theatre to the humanity walking outside it; and in order to express those new perceptions, broader visions, he had to discard the special technique of the stage. He found it - or at any rate he found the special form of it he had cast - too fixed and rigid for these finer, fuller registrations. (22)*

By this he meant that on stage Houghton had to rely on "broad relationships and simplified emotions, and a lack of subtleties and semitones." (ibid.). Like Arnold Bennett, Houghton realised that,

*if the dramatist attempts to go beyond a certain very mild degree of subtlety he is merely wasting his time; what passes for subtle on the stage would have a very obvious air as a novel. (23)*

This perhaps accounts for the hints of Bennett in the novel. This freedom to develop character in a novel certainly intrigued Houghton:

*I am quite absorbed in it, and work at it as I haven't done at anything since 'Hindle Wakes'. One has the feeling that nothing can ever spoil the work when you've done it, no worry of rehearsals and actors can ever come between your effect and the public. (24)*

Houghton was not on his own in this respect. Several contemporary dramatists were also novelists such as Bennett, Galsworthy and Maugham.

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22. Men of Letters, op.cit. p.175.

23. Quoted by Scott op.cit. p.176.

24. Introduction, p.xxi.



Indeed, Somerset Maugham (1874-1965) provides an interesting insight into the thoughts and feelings that may have occupied Houghton's mind. The similarities are noticeable, as will be seen shortly. In 1911 he wrote that:

*I became in due course a very successful playwright and determined to devote the rest of my life to the drama. But I reckoned without a force within me that made my resolutions vain. I was happy, I was prosperous, I was busy. My head was full of the plays I wanted to write. I do not know whether it was that success did not bring me all I had expected or whether it was a natural reaction from it, but I was no sooner firmly established as the most popular dramatist of the day than I began once more to be obsessed by the teeming memories of my past life. They came back to me so pressingly, in my sleep, on my walks, at rehearsals, at parties, they became such a burden to me, that I made up my mind there was only one way to be free of them and that was to write them all down on paper. After submitting myself for some years to the exigencies of the drama I hankered after the wide liberty of the novel. I knew the book I had in mind would be a long one and I wanted to be undisturbed, so I refused the contracts that managers were eagerly offering me and temporarily retired from the stage. I was then thirty-seven.* (25)

Houghton, aged thirty-two in 1913, based Life on facts and incidents central to him and his family. It is now possible, for the first time, to show that Houghton's incomplete novel was built around a framework constructed of people and events in his own life. Dixon Scott probably never realised the depth of his own words concerning the novel:

*it is reproducing life more intimately, honourably, and discriminatingly than ... in any of his plays. He is still dealing with Lancashire - but he is dealing with it more finely .... cutting closer, amassing more minutely ... more lifelike than 'Hindle Wakes'.* (26)

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25. Of Human Bondage, Heinemann, 1977, pp.vi-vii. (Foreword).  
26. Men of Letters, op.cit. p.176.

For the remainder of this chapter I intend to consider the novel under two headings: firstly its almost autobiographical framework and secondly its theme and treatment in relation to two other novels of the period.

The six chapters in The Works (Vol.3, pp.229-304) tell the story of Maggie Heywood, who, in 1910, at the age of twenty-three, returns to her home town of Salchester (a combination of Salford and Manchester)<sup>(27)</sup> after a three week holiday with her cousin in Wimbledon. Her parents are Nonconformists (like Houghton's grandparents), and she has one brother, Bobby, aged twenty. Maggie is three years older than Bobby which is a reversal of Houghton and his only sister: he was three years older than her. The opening chapter is set in exactly the place that Houghton grew up in: it covers the area from Ashton-on-Mersey where he was born to Whalley Range in Manchester where he lived until his death (apart from London and Paris, of course). Indeed, if one substitutes gender, the opening paragraph becomes real:

*Spread out in front of her was the small patch of the earth's surface upon which she had, almost continuously ever since she could remember, existed and worshipped; in the narrow limits of which were centred all her hopes, her fears, and her affections. (p.229)*

The history and the geography of the area are based on fact.<sup>(28)</sup> The whole area and location of the story can be plotted on a street directory of Manchester.<sup>(29)</sup> Houghton maintains most of the original

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27. As used in his plays Independent Means and The Younger Generation.  
28. Compare pp.229-238 with F.A. Bruton, A Short History of Manchester and Salford, op.cit. pp.252 ff. or H.M. McKechnie, (Ed), Manchester in 1915, Manchester U.P., 1915, pp.9-12.  
29. e.g. Geographia Plan of Greater Manchester, Sherratt and Hughes.

names but alters those which would give away the exact location of his heroine's home: his own. The main river in the novel is the Seymer (an anagram of Mersey) which runs south of the main location of Chiltern-with-Manby (Chorlton-cum-Hardy). He refers to the length of the Mersey from Birkenpool (a combination of Birkenhead and Liverpool) to Southenden (Northenden, Manchester), and in particular to an inn on a stretch at Thompson Crossing. This must be the Jackson's Footbridge near the Bridge Inn close to what is now Sale Golf Course on Hardy Lane. The heroine's home is seen by her on her return from an actual train station:

*The newish red-brick houses of Argyll Road [Athol Road], lying just off Prince's Road [Princess Road], farthest outposts of Salchester on the South side. (p.237).*

Houghton's house on Athol Road was red-brick and had not been long built before his own parents moved into it. The fictitious train does not stop at that real station but carries on into the Midland Station (Central Station) near the Central Hotel (Midland Hotel) on p.248. At the station she is met by the Rev. Harold Simon, "*the pastor of the Manley Row Wesleyan Chapel*". (p.239). Manley Road is in fact very close to Athol Road and does have a church there. Indeed, Houghton's brother-in-law resided with his own parents at 44 Manley Road, Whalley Range, just prior to his wedding to Houghton's sister in 1910.<sup>(30)</sup> As such Maggie could have been modelled on Houghton's favourite cousin Emily Muriel Pullein Thompson who married the Rev. J. Pullein Thompson. She was also three years younger than Houghton. (See Ch.1, p.5 ). From the station they take a taxi-cab "*up City Road [actual] and Great Johnson Street [Great Jackson Street]*." One now meets her father John Heywood, who has the same christian name

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30. Marriage entry No.477, 10 Oct.1910, St. Margaret's Church, Whalley Road, Whalley Range. Here one may find ages and addresses.

as Houghton's father, and indeed both initials. Like Houghton's father, he too is a member of the Royal Exchange (p.238) and has a business in cotton whose address of 16A Back Morley Street, Salchester, is a combination of Houghton's original business address of Meal Street, behind Mosley Street, Manchester, and later address of 16 Queen Street, Albert Square. Bobby, the brother, like Stanley Houghton, also follows a similar occupation: "*after he left school [he] ... went to Barley Brothers' [Batterby's] office in the city*". (p.247).

The story continues with Maggie being proposed marriage to by the Rev. Simon, to which she agrees. Shortly afterwards she meets George Ferguson aged, "*about thirty*" who is to figure largely in her life. In reality Houghton's sister was proposed to by William Newton Caw when he was thirty-three (see fn.30); he was seven years older than Houghton's sister. George, too, is seven years older than Maggie. Indeed, like George, Mr. Caw was a bank official.<sup>(31)</sup> Both were keen on sport: George is a proficient cricketer whilst Mr. Caw eventually became Captain of the Northenden Golf Club.<sup>(32)</sup> George, prior to his elopement, was in lodgings off Manley Row in Brantwood Road which must be a combination of the actual Brantingham Road, off Manley Road, in a house named 'Brentwood' which was also the name of the house first occupied by Houghton's sister and her husband after their wedding. Not only that, but as in the novel, the location is actually next to Manchester Cricket Club.

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31. Confirmed by Miss C.M. Shaw of Altrincham who worked with Mr. Caw at The District Bank, 35 King Street, Manchester. He became Head Cashier.

32. *ibid.*

Finally, it is interesting to note that in the novel the Rev. Simon's official residence is on Willingdon Road which must be Withington Road, next to Manley Road. Also in the novel there are references to holidays in Criccieth (p.299) and Norway (p.300) both places having been visited by Houghton. From p.296 onwards the Kennion family are introduced and play a part in the novel. The characters were taken straight from his play The Younger Generation (1909) and they were reputedly based on a real-life family Houghton knew well (see p.150 supra).

Two novels written in Houghton's time bear comparison with Life: George Moore's Esther Waters (1894) and H.G. Wells's Ann Veronica (1909): in all three one finds similarities in theme and treatment both of which will be discussed shortly. I have already said much about Ann Veronica the heroine in connection with Fanny Hawthorn of Hindle Wakes (see p.302). Moore (1852-1933) tells the story of a religiously-minded girl driven from her home into domestic service where she is eventually seduced by a fellow servant and deserted. She is forced to leave and endures a life of poverty, hardship and humiliation until her seducer eventually returns and marries her and finally, on his death, leaves her penniless. The book was considered *immoral* by some and Mudie's Library actually banned it.<sup>(33)</sup> Walter Allen, however, saw it as

*written throughout with a grave sympathy for its heroine, a recognition of her natural goodness, heroism and dignity.* (op.cit. p.vii)

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33. George Moore, Esther Waters, Dent, 1965, p.v. (with an introduction by Walter Allen).

Much the same can be said about Maggie Heywood: at least, in the first six chapters, one gets that impression. Allen further argues that Esther Waters, though heroic, is still "*ordinary ... unsensational*" (p.viii) in that its truth, whilst mundane is a "*sober recital of the facts*". Indeed,

*never was a work of fiction written that contained less of the obviously fictitious. We are in a world of the completely ordinary. There are no villains, merely men and women caught in the grip of circumstances and environment".* (p.viii).

Again this can be applied equally to Houghton's novel.

Allen's final view that Moore, with this novel, "*had accomplished something entirely new - a realistic handling of a moral problem*" (ibid.) reminds one of what I have already said about Hindle Wakes and Houghton's handling of a moral problem (see p.282). In Hindle Wakes and in Life Houghton echoed Moore whose "*novel teems with life and characters, all faithfully and exactly observed, and summed up in imagery never sensational but always precise*". (p.ix) Whether Houghton actually read Esther Waters is unknown but he must have been aware of the dramatised version<sup>(34)</sup> which was first produced at the Apollo Theatre, London, on 10 December 1911<sup>(35)</sup> under the auspices of Frederick Whelen (whom Houghton later knew: see p.255) and The Stage Society (which produced Hindle Wakes: see p.243). It was published in 1913.

Moving on to Ann Veronica one finds stronger similarities. It will be recalled that Houghton greatly admired Wells as "*one of the greatest*

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34. George Moore, Esther Waters : a play in five acts. Heinemann, 1913.

35. ibid. p.ix. See also A. Nicoll, English Drama 1900-1930, op.cit. p.842.

of our living novelists".<sup>(36)</sup> Houghton was one of the first people in Manchester to condemn publicly the City Council's decision to ban The New Machiavelli (1911) in Manchester (see p.133). He therefore probably knew his works well. Like Esther Waters (and indeed Hindle Wakes) it too was considered immoral by some. In fact Wells's publisher refused to publish a book that they considered to be "exceedingly distasteful" (see p.383). Briefly it tells the story of a girl who fights convention: she does not want marriage, despite the presence of a respectable suitor and her domineering father's commands. She leaves home, borrows money from an older man who then tries to seduce her, becomes a Suffragette, and has an affair (at her own instigation) with a married man on holiday in Switzerland and becomes pregnant. Maggie Heywood in Life likewise fights convention. Disillusioned with her dull life she only accepts marriage from the Rev. Simon because of the advantages it would bring her:

*she would get away from home and the old life; that was the most important advantage. (Vol.3, p.256).*

However, on the very eve of her wedding she elopes with George after having proposed to him. They leave for Paris where the peaceful scene of "two heads on the pillow next morning" (p.304) is shattered by the news that George already has a wife. How far Houghton would have continued to echo Wells's treatment from this point remains speculative since the novel never got any further. However, the notes left behind by Houghton certainly give a clue:

*Maggie is in blank despair but continues to live with him. She writes home she is married, and Mr. Heywood announces the marriage in the 'Salchester Guardian'. The real wife calls on the Heywoods. Mr. Heywood goes to Paris. Maggie decides to stay there with George, who is speedily faithless. (Vol.3, p.304)*

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36. A letter he wrote to The Manchester Guardian, 8 April 1911, p.12.

Maggie's ultimate fate remains even less certain. Indications are that, like Esther Waters, she was destined for the streets but "at what point and in what condition it was intended finally to leave her is not now possible to decide". (The Works, Vol.3, p.304).

In terms of physical appearance, temperament and major themes Houghton certainly has remained close to Wells. For example, the physical likeness of both Ann and Maggie is obvious. Compare this

*her slim figure and dark eyes attracted him [George] and he felt that there was a fire in those eyes at present merely limpid which might be roused by conversation other than that consisting of polite commonplaces .... [He was also attracted by] her well-marked arched brows and the way her crisp dark hair sprang away from her temples and clung round the nape of her neck. Her lips, too, were well cut, firm and red. Altogether a determined young woman.*

(Vol.3, pp.253-4)

with this:

*Ann Veronica Stanley was twenty-one and a half years old. She had black hair, fine eyebrows, and a clear complexion; and the forces that had modelled her features had loved and lingered at their work and made them subtle and fine .... Her lips came together with an expression between contentment and the faintest shadow of a smile, her manner was one of quiet reserve, and behind this mask she was wildly discontented and eager for freedom and life. She wanted to live. (37)*

The similarity in temperament is even more marked. For example, compare this:

*Maggie was still, for a girl of twenty-three, singularly without any clear or definite opinions about life, herself, and things in general. She was, however, conscious of an undercurrent of emotions that could hardly be accounted for, emotions that sometimes tried to find expression in ways that were not quite convenient. She would have liked to talk about these things, but she had no congenial friends. (p.247)*

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37. The Works of H.G. Wells, T. Fisher Unwin, 1925, (Atlantic Edition), Vol.XIII, p.6.



with this:

*And experience was slow in coming. All the world about her seemed to be - how can one put it? - in wrappers, like a house when people leave it in the summer. The blinds were all drawn, the sunlight kept out, one could not tell what colours these grey swathings hid. She wanted to know. And there was no intimation whatever that the blinds would ever go up or the windows or doors be opened, or the chandeliers, that seemed to promise such a blaze of fire, unveiled and furnished and lit. Dim souls flitted about her, not only speaking but it would seem even thinking in undertones .... (p.7)*

Maggie's reaction to George resembles that of Ann's to both Ramage and later Capes. Thus:

*Maggie did not find it immediately easy to talk to George .... there was a sort of strangeness in being alone on the water with a man .... She did not know how to begin, when it came to conversation. However, George had no hesitation .... He was actually going abroad! And he said it with such an air of indifference, as if it was nothing to go abroad .... As if he was used to it! .... It was obvious that he was making a polite understatement of his abilities in order to keep her at her ease, and prevent her feeling shy in the presence of so much accomplishment .... Wonderful man! He knew the world and how to go about it. (pp.299-302)*

compares with:

*And while he talked and watched her as he talked, she answered, and behind her listening watched and thought about him. She liked the animated eagerness of his manner.*

*His mind seemed to be a remarkably full one; his knowledge of detailed reality came in just where her own mind was most weakly equipped. Through all he said ran one quality that pleased her - the quality of a man who feels that things can be done, that one need not wait for the world to push one before one moved. Compared with her father and Mr. Manning and the men in "fixed" positions generally that she knew, Ramage, presented by himself, had a fine suggestion of freedom, of power, of deliberate and sustained adventure ....*

*She was particularly charmed by this theory of friendship. It was really very jolly to talk to a man in this way - who saw the woman in her and did not treat her as a child.*

*She was inclined to think that perhaps for a girl the converse of his method was the case; an older man, a man beyond the range of anything "nonsensical," was, perhaps, the most interesting sort of friend one could meet. But in that reservation it may be she went a little beyond the converse of his view ....*

*They got on wonderfully well together. They talked for the better part of an hour, and at last walked together to the junction of high-road ...*

(p.89)

Finally, one finds a parallel in the major theme of each novel.

Houghton's is indeed in its title. Maggie says to George:

*"Do you know what I want most of all?"*

*"No".*

*"To see life .... All sorts of life ..."*

(p.302)

At this point the novel ends abruptly but Houghton's outlines provide a running summary, part of which notes that

*Maggie is to 'see life',*

(p.303)

whereas Wells allows his to be expressed as follows:

*Capes thought.*

*"It's odd - I have no doubt in my mind that what we are doing is wrong," he said. "And yet I do it without compunction."*

*"I never felt so absolutely right," said Ann Veronica.*

*"You are a female thing at bottom," he admitted. "I'm not nearly so sure as you. As for me, I look twice at it .... Life is two things, that's how I see it; two things mixed and muddled up together. Life is morality - life is adventure. Squire and master. Adventure rules and morality - looks up the trains in the Bradshaw. Morality tells you what is right, and adventure moves you.*

(p.359)

Both novels are indeed studies of an individual's quest for life.

Had Houghton have completed and published Life there is little doubt that like Esther Waters and Ann Veronica it too would have raised serious objections and for similar reasons: its sexual innuendoes and controversial morality. For example, Maggie Heywood was sexually aware:

*it was men she liked to look at .... the strange men on the visiting evenings to whom she was introduced on fine Saturdays .... the glimpse of sun-burnt chest visible where the top two or three buttons of their shirts had been left unfastened.* (p.250)

Also, and perhaps ironically, the money which enables her to elope was a bequest from a relative who

*had amassed a comfortable income in the oldest and least honourable of the professions.* (p.292)

Indeed,

*in the hey-day of her youth [this relative was] a woman of considerable personal charm and beauty, and she ... [sic] well, she had made the most of these attractions.* (ibid.).

Moreover, when she got older and "found these attractions growing feebler, she had wisely retired ... and .... presided over the rites instead of participating in them". (ibid.). Later, as I have already noted, Houghton intended to show Maggie, "oscillating between the two men" (p.303), eventually proposing to George and eloping with him to Paris where the following morning one was to find "two heads on the pillow". (p.304) Even when Maggie finds out that George is already married, "She continues to live with him". (ibid.).

Just how severe such objections would have been is of course hypothetical but there is no doubt that it would have fallen somewhere between those objections raised against Ann Veronica and Hindle Wakes, which only had a gap of two years between them. I have said much about the latter;

the former was said to be

*among the first studies ever made of the young woman of the English intelligentsia .... [which was then] not so much criticised as attacked with hysterical animosity by people who did not like the heroine or who disapproved of her thoughts and ways. (38)*

On publication it received varied views with the Spectator labelling it "a poisonous book" which was "likely to ... undermine that sense of continence and self-control in the individual which is essential to a sound and healthy State".<sup>(39)</sup> It condemned the view that "when the temptation is strong enough, not only is the tempted person justified in yielding, but such yielding becomes not merely inevitable but something to be welcomed and glorified". Wells denied such charges, stating that he was "merely bringing the relations between the sexes into the open".<sup>(40)</sup> Houghton was similarly doing the same: like Wells he must have held the view that there were women "who combine(s) a forwardness about sex with an intellectual curiosity about life".<sup>(41)</sup>

Finally, the history of Wells's attempts to publish Ann Veronica is relevant. Macmillan rejected it on the grounds that sexual escapades made it unattractive: "the plot develops on lines that would be exceedingly distasteful to the public which buys books published by our firm".<sup>(42)</sup> However, not long afterwards the publisher, T. Fisher Unwin, was joined by a nephew, Stanley Unwin, who began to widen the

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38. The Works of H.G. Wells, op.cit. p.ix.

39. 20 Nov.1909, pp.846-47. (No.4247). See also S. Hynes, op.cit. pp.293-94.

40. Noted by Lovat Dickson, op.cit. p.159.

41. *ibid.* p.160.

42. Letter published in Lovat Dickson, op.cit. p.166.

firm's scope. He wrote to many authors inviting them to submit novels: he sent a letter to Wells the very day Macmillan rejected Ann Veronica. Unwin later published it.<sup>(43)</sup> By 1912 a similar approach was apparently made to Stanley Houghton by the same publisher: *"he worked upon a novel for Mr. Fisher Unwin"*.<sup>(44)</sup> However, subsequent investigation with the firm who eventually acquired Unwin (Ernest Benn Co.) has failed to trace any record of such an agreement.

There is little doubt that the novel, on completion would, as Brighouse rightly assumes, have created for Houghton, *"a reputation as a novelist hardly inferior to that which he enjoyed as a dramatist"*.<sup>(45)</sup>

Houghton had, in fact, already prepared the outlines for a second novel based on his short story Hawthorn Lodge, *"with the house getting bigger as the family disperses"*. It was to be entitled, 'Home'.<sup>(46)</sup>

Dixon Scott was even more confident in his prediction that *"In another five years his fame would have rested not upon plays but on novels"*.<sup>(47)</sup> Indeed, Scott saw this desire in Houghton as the reason for his failure to write a play as great as Hindle Wakes: it was not an inability but *"a sign of exactly the reverse: their vitality [the plays after Hindle Wakes] was lessened because their author had grown out of them. He died too soon for his reputation, not too late"*.<sup>(48)</sup>

It is highly unlikely that Houghton would have given up playwriting completely. Instead he would have been an Arnold Bennett in reverse,

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43. Lovat Dickson, op.cit. p.166.

44. From an unidentified clipping in the Harvard University Theatre Collection dated 19 Dec.1913. See Ch.8, fn.10 for more details.

45. Introduction, p.xxi.

46. *ibid.*

47. Men of Letters, op.cit. p.165.

48. *ibid.*

so to speak: more plays than novels but novels nonetheless. This is what perhaps Brighthouse meant when he noted that Houghton had

*beyond doubt, an unexpressed desire to do for Manchester what Mr. Arnold Bennett had done for the Potteries.*

(Introduction, p.lviii)

Houghton indeed held a somewhat similar philosophy to Bennett:

*A great novelist must have great qualities of mind. His mind must be sympathetic, quickly responsive, courageous, honest, humorous, tender, just, merciful. He must be able to conceive the ideal without losing sight of the fact that it is a human world we live in. Above all, the novelist's mind must be permeated and controlled by common sense. (49)*

The above consideration of Houghton's prose brings to an end the study of his literary career. It now only remains to follow the final months of his life. The next chapter, therefore, will follow on from where Chapter 10 left off.

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49. Quoted by J. Agate, Alarums and Excursions, Grant Richards, 1922, p.262.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### VENICE; ILLNESS; DEATH

In June 1913 Houghton journeyed to London for the rehearsals of The Perfect Cure (see p.206), called in to see his parents in Manchester, and after the play's production returned to Paris.<sup>(1)</sup> Once back he was taken ill but put it down to a bad crossing of the Channel.<sup>(2)</sup> After a day's rest he proceeded to Venice where, according to Brighouse, he had been invited by the American dramatist Edward Sheldon (1886-1946). Sheldon, one of the first to graduate from Professor Baker's 47 Workshop (see p.267) was a renowned dramatist of the period. Indeed, he had been "*hailed as the rising hope of the American theatre*", and also as "*the leader of the new school of realistic writers*" in that country.<sup>(3)</sup>

Venice had been a favourite place of Sheldon's for some time. Other writers used to congregate there with him in order to write. For example, Edward Knoblock recalled vividly one such meeting:

*He [Sheldon] asked me to go with him to Cadenabbia [Lake Como] where he had taken a little villa in order to start a new play .... [we] spent a month there in literary solitude. We saw no-one - except for one visit of some friends of his - both working hard all day and hardly ever speaking over our meals. For Sheldon was by nature very taciturn.* (4)

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1. Introduction, p.XXI.
  2. *ibid.*
  3. O.C.T. p.880.
  4. Round the Room, op.cit. p.184. See also F. Swinnerton (Ed), The Journals of Arnold Bennett, op.cit. pp.236-7 and E.W. Barnes, The Man Who Lived Twice : the biography of Edward Sheldon, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956, pp.84-85.

Indeed, *"the atmosphere of Como was a stimulus rather than a distraction ... [with its] bright sunshine, with a setting of peacock-blue water, of flower-covered marble terraces."*<sup>(5)</sup>

Why Houghton should head straight to Venice is not as straightforward as Brighthouse suggests. He may well have met Sheldon previously and Professor Baker may have been involved. However, Sheldon's biographer gives the impression that their meeting on this particular occasion was purely coincidental:

*June found him [Sheldon] in Venice, where he realised an ambition of years by renting for a month a magnificent old palazzo, full of dim gilding and Tintoretto's, complete with gondola, gondolier, and an assortment of servants. The very day (6) he moved in he ran into an acquaintance, a young British playwright, and promptly invited him to dinner.*<sup>(7)</sup>

Although Houghton is never mentioned by name in the biography it will gradually emerge from the account that follows that it was in fact him.

It will be remembered that Houghton had just left England where The Perfect Cure had been taken off after only a few days run and on the very morning of the play's closure he was approached by the well-known manager Charles Frohman who *"showed his pluck and confidence in [Houghton] ... by giving him an excellent commission for a new play"*.<sup>(8)</sup> Such an offer from a man of Frohman's standing was indeed an honour:

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5. The Man Who Lived Twice, op.cit. p.84.

6. Approx. 23 June 1913.

7. The Man Who Lived Twice, op.cit. p.98.

8. Letter from Houghton's business manager in The Sunday Times, 21 Dec.1913, H.C. Vol.M.



*He was, for many years, the Czar, the Kaiser, the undisputed lord of the theatre. In Paris, Berlin and Vienna, as well as in London and New York, he meant success to all the authors, and all the authors had their eye on him. (9)*

Frohman (1860-1915) had a reputation on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>(10)</sup> His dedication to the theatre had resulted in "a series of plays that set a new mark for English production".<sup>(11)</sup> In fact, the view was held that from him

*the English-speaking drama received an impetus and a standard that it never would have had without his unflagging zeal and his generous purse.*  
(ibid. p.252)

Many of his closest friends were the great names of the theatre and Pinero was reputed to have given him first option on all his plays for America.<sup>(12)</sup> Perhaps most importantly for Houghton, however, was the fact that "nothing gave Charles more satisfaction in England ... than his encouragement of the British playwright". (ibid. p.270). It was probably with this commission that Houghton set off to Venice and whilst he never actually managed to write the play he still cherished Frohman's faith in him:

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9. A. Sutro, Celebrities and Simple Souls, op.cit. p.152.
  10. See O.C.T., pp.356 and 796.
  11. I.F. Marcossion and D. Frohman, Charles Frohman : Manager and Man, John Lane, 1916, p.249.
  12. Charles Frohman : Manager and Man, op.cit. p.270. Here one may find an impressive list of such names.

*during his long illness [Houghton] derived great encouragement and consolation from this proof of confidence on the part of a great manager and a great man. (13)*

Houghton duly arrived for dinner with Sheldon that evening in Venice.

Unfortunately the meal was never to be finished:

*During the meal his guest was taken violently ill and had to be rushed to a hospital outside of Venice. Ned was so concerned about the young man that he not only accompanied him to the hospital but stayed with him until he had recovered from his illness. By that time the lease on the palazzo was almost up. In all Ned spent exactly three nights in it. (14)*

Before continuing with events, however, it would be relevant at this point to consider briefly the similarities that existed between these two playwrights since they may help to explain the apparent ease with which they seem to have organised this meeting. Thus Sheldon was like Houghton in the type of plays he wrote: his The High Road (1912) has a similar plot to Houghton's Trust the People (1912).

Their temperaments were also generally alike:

*in Sheldon's case there was already, if not reserve, at least an inner core of reticence which his most constant companions could not penetrate .... In the midst of some passionate discussion ... [he no longer took] active part but seemed rather to be listening with an air of amused watchfulness. It was as though he had thrashed out that particular point long ago and were waiting for the others to catch up with him. (15)*

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13. The Sunday Times letter, op.cit. Frohman was a victim of the Lusitania not long after. He had in fact asked Sheldon to accompany him on the sailing but Sheldon changed his mind at the last moment (see The Man Who Lived Twice, op.cit. p.105). Such was Frohman's reputation that the New York Times (8 May 1915) carried the front page headline: "Lusitania sunk ... probably 1,200 Dead ... Capt. Turner saved, Frohman and Vanderbilt missing". Brighouse erroneously states that he drowned in the Titanic disaster (see What I have had, op.cit. p.53.)
  14. The Man Who Lived Twice, op.cit. pp.98-99.
  15. *ibid.* p.27.

This bears comparison with what I said earlier about Houghton (see p.34). In terms of dedication and drive there was also a resemblance: with Sheldon

*there was no resting either on his artistic laurels or his prosperity. It seemed now [1911-1912] as though Sheldon were being driven by some invisible whip, to produce faster and faster-to pour his creative energy into plays good, bad, and indifferent - as if in some deep recess of his subconscious mind he feared the golden current might suddenly be cut off. (16)*

Such industry and worry (remembering his precarious health and the fact that by September 1912 he had made his will out) was also typical of Houghton. In the event Houghton died but Sheldon a few years later became paralysed from the neck down due to progressive arthritis. He eventually went blind and was confined to bed for the last twenty years of his life. Many people from the English theatre visited him including (Sir) John Gielgud, (Dame) Peggy Ashcroft and (Sir) Alec Guinness. However, none of these ever recalled Sheldon mentioning Houghton. (17)

Perhaps the greatest similarity between the two writers lay in their philosophy of life:

*He [Sheldon] also had nothing to say to the man or woman whose moral sense was atrophied through egotism and self-interest .... [they were] people on whom he turned his back with complete ruthlessness .... He knew that with them there could be no true exchange of feeling, no real understanding. They were closed to everything outside themselves, as incapable of receiving as of giving. (18)*

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16. The Man Who Lived Twice, op.cit. p.68.

17. As confirmed in letters to me, December 1982.

18. The Man Who Lived Twice, op.cit. p.315.

Such a viewpoint, I believe, has been shown to be true of Houghton.

From Sheldon's villa Houghton was taken to the Cosmopolitan Hospital, Gindecca, Venice,<sup>(19)</sup> after an English doctor had diagnosed "*with some reserve, influenza*".<sup>(20)</sup> Two weeks later "*an instant operation for acute appendicitis became necessary*".<sup>(21)</sup> The operation was later reported in The Referee, The Sunday Times and The Manchester Programme.<sup>(22)</sup> His parents were sent for and took up residence at La Calcina Hotel (Pension)<sup>(23)</sup> when shortly afterwards a second, more dangerous operation was performed "*without anaesthetic*".<sup>(24)</sup> Houghton's mother gave a fuller picture to Miss Horniman:

*As I am staying in Venice to be near my son Stanley - he asked me if I would reply to your very kind letter for him. I am glad to be able to tell you that he is now slowly recovering from his second operation, which was for a large abcess [sic] at the base of the right lung. You will know that in his weak state after the first operation, his recovery is bound to be slow - but if it is only sure, I do not mind that as much. The doctors attribute all his illness to some poison he must have taken.*<sup>(25)</sup>

Brighouse provides more information about this poison. He noted that the exact origin of the illness was never agreed upon by doctors. He had suffered before Hindle Wakes from complicated tooth trouble:

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19. Address on a letter to Monkhouse from Houghton (undated) c.20 Sept.1913, ANM 10.
  20. Introduction, p.xxii.
  21. *ibid.*
  22. 20 July, 28 Sept, 28 July, 1913, respectively, H.C. Vol.L.
  23. Address on a letter from Mrs. Houghton to Miss Horniman 5 Sept.1913, Cade Collection.
  24. Introduction, p.xxii.
  25. 5 Sept.1913, Cade Collection.

*a small operation was suggested, but the pain had ceased, and the operation did not take place. Possibly, and it is at least as reasonable a theory as the suggestion that toxin was introduced later through eating bad food, the poisonous matter was first present in his system so long before his death as the autumn of 1912 .... from then onwards Houghton was a sick man. (26)*

His three months in hospital were tedious but he remained confident. His mother wrote that *"he is now fairly cheerful, though still very weak; he is quite able to read his letters, and does just a little reading besides".* Indeed, she was grateful:

*I am very thankful to be able to be near him; his father was here for several weeks also, but has now returned home. (27)*

Two letters to Monkhouse from the hospital are particularly poignant. The first is undated but must be about 20 September 1913:

*Your letters are wonderfully welcome, but I can't reply to them as I ought. For one thing, I am writing very little, my mother conducts most of my correspondence .... Well, here we are at the eleventh week of my illness in Venice & I don't quite see the end yet. Not under another month, anyhow. It is getting much cooler now, & soon we shall be complaining of the cold. I am to go out in a gondola this afternoon. It sounds advanced; but they carry me on a stretcher. I can hardly believe I am going, yet. Oh the rubbish in the way of novels in this hospital. But I read a lot of 'em.*

*Edward Knoblauch is here & has been to see me a good deal. I get the M.G. each day, you know .... Well, I'm tired. Goodbye & thanks very much. Ever yours. (28)*

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26. Introduction, p.xviii.  
27. 5 Sept. 1913, op.cit.  
28. ANM 10.

The second letter is dated 27 September and was written in pencil:

*It was delightful to receive "Mr. Surrage" (29) so unexpectedly. Thank you so much. I see from reading it how stupidly some of the parts were played at Liverpool .... I am moving, I believe, in a few days, to the Hotel Calcina, Zattere, Venice, where mother is staying. That is a little more promising. I am hoping to hear from Mrs. Monkhouse; it will be so kind of her to write. I've been here three months now! Ever yours. (30)*

In October 1913 he was brought back to Manchester to be nursed at his parents' home. According to the critic Cecil Chisholm a new type of treatment was being tried on him "of which the highest hopes were entertained". (31) Meanwhile he seemed to be a lot happier than in Venice:

*It was then, more than ever, that those friends who were allowed to see him were impressed with the amazing gain in breath of outlook, of maturity. Faced with the certain prospect of a long convalescence, of at least a year out of the arena, he was more than patient. He was cheerful, not merely taking an invalid's privilege of being talked at, but insisting on brilliantly leading the conversation. (32)*

He was also, understandably, despondent as seen in one of the last known letters written by him. It was a reply to Charles Frohman (see p.387):

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29. Monkhouse's play The Education of Mr. Surrage (1912). See also p.344 supra.
30. ANM 10.
31. Unidentified clipping of Dec.1913 in Manchester Central Reference Library, Local History: ref. 920. Chisholm was dramatic critic of the Manchester Courier.
32. Introduction, p.xxii.

*With regard to my health, I am afraid you have been correctly informed. I am still very ill and confined to bed. It is now nearly six months since I took to it, and I am pretty tired of it .... But there is no doubt that progress is being made, though it is incredibly slow. It will be months before I am out and about again. I can do nothing but wait and be cheerful.* (33)

On Wednesday 10 December 1913 the Manchester Courier (p.7) carried a note expressing grave concern for a sudden deterioration in Houghton's health. Ironically that same morning also saw the release of the 1914 edition of Who's Who with his first ever entry. (34) Then at 2.10. on the following morning, Thursday 11 December 1913, Stanley Houghton died. (35) It was sudden: *"with but little warning, the poison reached the brain, meningitis set in, and he died"*. (36) He was thirty-two years of age. His father registered the death the next day. The family doctor, John Pringle (see p.78), gave the cause of death as septic pneumonia (four months) and basal meningitis (six days). (37) Arrangements were made immediately for the funeral to take place on the following Saturday, 13 December. Before that, however, the whole country was to be informed of the tragic loss.

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33. Unidentified clipping in the Harvard Theatre Collection. See Ch.8, fn.10 for details.

34. The Daily Sketch, 12 Dec.1913, H.C. Vol.L. carried a copy of the relevant page. It added *"published for the first time ... only 17 hours before he died"*.

35. Manchester Courier, 11 Dec.1913, p.7.

36. Introduction, p.xxii.

37. Death Certificate No.193. His occupation was given as "Play Wright". His father was stated as having been present at death. The certificate is located at Manchester Registry Office (Births and Deaths), Jackson's Row, Deansgate.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### FUNERAL AND MEMORIALS

Almost every paper in the country carried the news of Houghton's death. The Manchester Guardian in particular gave it much coverage on the day: it announced it on page 8, gave a photograph on page 10 and a full obituary by Monkhouse on page 16. Dixon Scott in fact wrote to Monkhouse to praise his notice:

*Your obituary was a most beautiful thing; one of the most beautiful things, in its way, you've ever written: You move among those rarer matters with such nobility.* (1)

The day after it carried the London reaction to his death:

*All the evening-paper newsbills flamed with his name: "Death of a Famous Dramatist"; "Death of the Author of 'Hindle Wakes'".* (p.5)

In fact the news caused a run on Hindle Wakes: "*six thousand copies ... have been sold and the sale goes briskly on*". (2) Reference has already been made to the tragic irony of his favourite cousin's wedding on the very day of his death and the request to local news-agents to remove their placards announcing it until the marriage procession had passed (see p.5 ).

The Times carried a sub-heading "*A loss to the English Drama*" (3) whilst The Manchester Courier headed its obituary: "*Manchester's Molière*". (4) The Morning Post lamented his death with the words,

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1. 27 Dec.1913 (postmark), ANM 6.
  2. The Manchester Guardian, 18 Dec.1913, p.6.
  3. 12 Dec.1913, p.11.
  4. 11 Dec.1913, p.7.



*his death means loss ... since his ideals were so infinitely more vital than those of the ordinary playwright and his gift of expression in the theatre such as few writers possess. (5)*

The Manchester Evening News carried a summary from several newspapers with the conclusion that

*All the papers in the country are united in paying tributes, more or less generous. (6)*

Miss Horniman perhaps summed up the loss and sadness in a letter to the editor of the Manchester Courier:

*The future of the English drama has sustained a great loss, for Stanley Houghton had the ability to write real plays about real people in ordinary life. Further experience of the world would have widened his outlook, but now he has gone from us, and we can only wonder why it should be so. His work will make his name remembered amongst those who have helped in the beginnings of movements without living to see their full development. I write this with deep regret that we should have lost him. (7)*

Hindle Wakes, as already mentioned, was played at the Gaiety four days after his death: the programme was edged in black out of respect, and Monkhouse, reviewing it, commented how

*The irony of events has brought [the play] to Manchester this week, and probably there was not a soul in the theatre last night unconscious of the presence of the author in the play. (8)*

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5. 12 Dec.1913, H.C. Vol.L.

6. 13 Dec. *ibid.*

7. 13 Dec.1913, H.C. Vol.L.

8. The Manchester Guardian, 16 Dec.1913, H.C. Vol.L.

The funeral was held at Manchester Crematorium<sup>(9)</sup> at 2 pm on Saturday 13 December 1913:

*There was a large gathering ... [but] scores of people were unable to gain admission to the building, and there were many manifestations of sympathy by the general public. (10)*

It was conducted by the family clergyman, the Rev. J. Pullein Thompson who, two days earlier, had conducted the marriage of his daughter (Houghton's favourite cousin) in Chelsea. It will be recalled that this man had also baptised Houghton (see Ch.1, fn.14). Apart from his mother, the immediate family was present. There were also other people who had known and worked with Houghton: T. Battersby (former employer); Dr. Pringle (formerly doctor and friend); Ernest Mayer (business manager); Cyril Hogg (of Samuel French Ltd); Edwin Heys (ex Gaiety manager); Harold Brighthouse (and his father); A.N. Monkhouse; C.P. Scott (of The Manchester Guardian); Norman Oddy (close friend: see p.27); Frank Nasmith (of The Manchester Athenaeum Dramatic Society and former co-writer). There were also representatives from **T**he Manchester Grammar School, the Playgoers' Club, the Athenaeum Dramatic Society, the Heaton Moor and the Sale Amateur Dramatic Societies. Miss Horniman was unable to be present but she closed the Gaiety for two hours during the afternoon as a mark of respect. Violet Vanbrugh, and other members of the profession, sent floral tributes.

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9. Southern Cemetry, Barlow Moor Rd, Manchester 21. The records relating to many funerals and cremations, including Houghton's, were destroyed during World War 2 when the office in Cooper St. was bombed. The Registrar advertised in the papers for any information so as to rewrite the records. Many replied but none of Houghton's family did. My search through the graveyard led to my finding his memorial stone (see below). This has now been re-registered.

10. The Era, 17 Dec.1913, H.C. Vol.M. See also the M.G. 15 Dec, p.8.

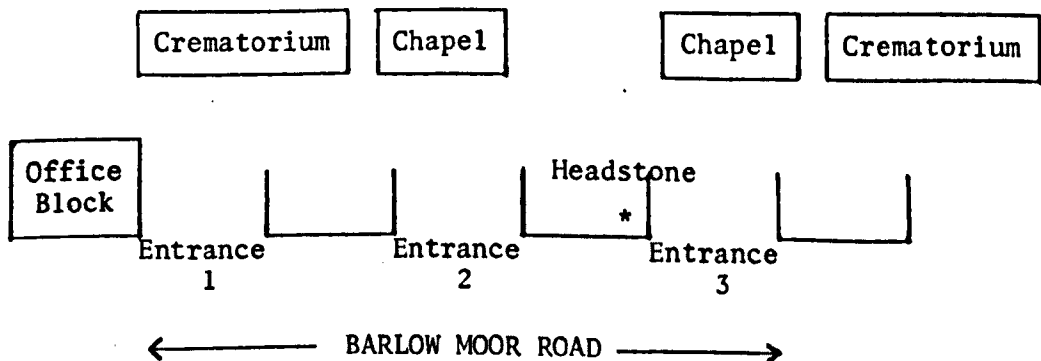
Fortunately a photograph exists which shows the horse-drawn hearse arriving at the cemetery. It has the caption:

*The late Mr. Stanley Houghton, the young author of 'Hindle Wakes', was buried with the simplest honours at Manchester, his native city, on Saturday. The absence of pomp was quite in harmony with the character of the man. (11)*

As his remains entered the chapel the organist played Chopin's Funeral March and as the service ended he played 'Oh, rest in the Lord' from Mendelssohn's Elijah and Handel's 'Dead March' from Saul.<sup>(12)</sup> His body was then cremated and the ashes scattered in the grounds of the crematorium.<sup>(13)</sup>

Not long afterwards a headstone in the shape of a black cross was erected as a memorial. It is still there to this day.<sup>(14)</sup> It reads:

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11. This photograph is an unidentified clipping found in Manchester Central Reference Library, Theatre Collection, ref: Theatre Scrapbooks No.7, Sc.1.
  12. The Manchester Guardian, 15 Dec.1913, p.8.
  13. Introduction, p.xxii.
  - 14.



In loving memory  
WILLIAM STANLEY HOUGHTON  
Dramatist  
Died December 11th 1913  
AGED 32 YEARS

Underneath on a lower stone is engraved:

ALSO  
JOHN HARTLEY HOUGHTON  
Father of the above,  
Who died March 20th 1923  
AGED 67 YEARS

and to the left (on the side) of this lower stone one finds:

ALSO  
LUCY MARY HOUGHTON  
Mother of the above,  
Who died March 11th 1930,  
AGED 74 YEARS

(15)

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15. Houghton's sister, Ellen Muriel Caw, died 14 May 1953 aged 69. She was also cremated at the above cemetery. Her husband died 15 Feb. 1956 and likewise was cremated. There is no memorial to them except for an entry in the Book of Remembrance.

Predictably there was much discussion in the Press as to how much money Houghton actually made from his writings. His business manager Ernest Mayer<sup>(16)</sup> was so annoyed that he wrote to The Sunday Times:

*Some time before his fatal illness began my friend and client ... asked me to contradict on his behalf the foolish statements circulated in the Press, to the effect that he had made £100,000 [£2,600,000 in 1981] out of 'Hindle Wakes'.*

*I advised him not to take any notice of these statements, as really it was nobody's business but his own. Now, however, that poor Houghton is dead, I feel bound to correct these statements, as well as those which, erring in the other direction, claim that he made only a few hundred pounds out of 'Hindle Wakes' and his other plays and that he lived in Paris in abject poverty.*

*I am more anxious to do this, lest (when the actual figures become known) the memory of my friend should be sullied by any suspicion that he was either profligate or mean. As his business representative, I am in a position to state that those who estimated his fees at £50,000 [£1,300,000 in 1981] and those who calculated them at no more than £500 [£13,000 in 1981] are equally wrong. If the former divide their calculations by ten, and the latter multiply theirs likewise, an approximately correct figure will be arrived at. (17)*

Mayer added one other interesting piece of information:

*In the otherwise generous obituary notices, poor Houghton is blamed for having accepted so many commissions. As a matter of fact, he refused five times more commissions than he accepted.*

Mayer was correct in his estimate of Houghton's estate. Houghton, it will be recalled made his will out on 9 September 1912: he left everything to his parents and his only sister Ellen Muriel Caw. His father and employer Thomas Henry Battersby were to be the executors<sup>(18)</sup> Probate took place on 7 February 1914 in London. The gross value of his estate was £5,488-14-5 (£148,176 in 1981) and net £5,307-15-0

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16. Houghton had a lot of respect for Mayer. See Ch.10, p.345.

17. 21 Dec.1913, H.C. Vol.M.

18. Will in The Family Division of The High Court of Justice, London.

(£143,289 in 1981). (19)

There was no doubt that Houghton's name would live on for some time after his death. However, two movements were set in motion with a view to perpetuating his name for posterity. The first consisted of some form of collection of his works. Brighthouse would seem to have been the natural choice to undertake this task but a point generally unknown is that it may have been otherwise. By 27 December 1913, that is just over two weeks after Houghton's death, a discussion would seem to have taken place between some staff of The Manchester Guardian about a collected edition. Dixon Scott provides a valuable insight into this discussion:

*The S.H. proposition is jolly interesting; it certainly ought to be done - if only for the value of those back-pagers (you mean to use those?) - and if Constable doesn't take to it (but he will, there being money in it) it might be good to try Martin Secker. Secker has done 2 complete sets of dramatists - Hauptmann and St. John Hankin; and he does his work with dignity, taste, distinction. I feel you ought to do the editing Allan - yes, even at the cost of keeping back the novel for a while .... It would entail, after all, not so very much*

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19. Attached to the Will. The bare facts are also recorded in Calendar of the Grants of Probate and Letters of Administration made in the Probate Registries of The High Court of Justice in England 1914, Vol.H-K, p.173. Location: County Archivist, County Hall, Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester (presently kept in a disused church in Hulme). Of interest are these facts: Houghton's father left £11,459-8-10 gross in his Will and Mrs. Houghton left £3,748-7-10 gross. Mr. Houghton made out his Will within six weeks of his son's death, leaving everything to his wife (Will in The High Court of Justice, London). See Calendar of Grants op.cit. 1923, p.220 and 1930, p.284 respectively. They vacated 2 Athol Road not long after Houghton's death.

*labour: an Introductory essay - 5,000 words, say  
- a few biographical data - some clippings from  
programmes giving casts. (20)*

Scott's almost urgent pleading would seem odd: why should Monkhouse not want to commemorate a dear friend? The answer would seem to lie in the fact that Brighouse had already been approached by Houghton's father and perhaps Monkhouse felt that he ought not to interfere - a move totally in keeping with Monkhouse's character: he would not want to hurt Brighouse in any way. Scott, however, did not think Brighouse the best choice:

*I suppose Brighouse is very worthy but I feel he'll ring the wrong note: he seems to me (I may be unjust through ignorance) to stand exactly for the side of Houghton that Houghton was outgrowing: his sympathies don't reach to Houghton's possibilities. You, at the end, saw something of his future - and it's very needful to insist that his work is a torso. Needful for many reasons .... but it needs more than dates & facts to erect the real conception, and the real conception (this is the other need for it) is so much more enkindling & encouraging: to see him gathering his skill & sensitising his powers, refusing, after one brief lapse, to make the most of popularity, is a noble & a stimulating & a reassuring picture: it not only gives a new interest to his old work; it is also a kind of general testimony to human decency: - but it isn't a picture to be painted convincingly of a Brighouse. He might do it sentimentally. But not with any finer, meditative strength. Do think it once more, simply from a sense of justice, before you finally refuse to take it on. (ibid.).*

Monkhouse did not take on the job: Brighouse did. One may recall the critics' reviews of The Works on publication (see pp. v - vi ). It is interesting to see how right Scott was in his estimation of Brighouse.

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20. Scott to Monkhouse, 27 Dec.1913 (postmark), ANM 6. This letter also appears in M. McCrossan, (Ed), The Letters of W. Dixon Scott, op.cit. pp.235-36. However, the published version has had all references to Brighouse and the proposed plan deleted. (See also Ch.4, fn.123).

It would appear that Houghton's father approached Brighouse not long after his death with a view to assessing the contents of his papers.<sup>(21)</sup> On 23 March 1914 a formal contract was drawn up between them, Samuel French Ltd and Constable.<sup>(22)</sup> For a fee of £25 (£675 in 1981) Brighouse was to write an introduction, arrange the material for the press and pass the proofs. Sidgwick and Jackson Ltd. were paid £20 (£540 in 1981) for the right to publish Hindle Wakes. Royalties were to be divided as 45% to Houghton's father, 10% to French and 45% to Constable. The edition was to be limited to one thousand copies for sale. Forty copies were provided in addition, presumably for gifts and press reviews. Brighouse worked quickly as the collection appeared in July 1914 entitled The Works of Stanley Houghton, in three volumes. Each carried the M.S.C. emblem (see p.96). The volumes, however, did not carry all the extant material by Houghton nor indeed mention them in the Introduction.<sup>(23)</sup>

Almost at the same time as the above contract was being signed another move was in progress to commemorate the name of Stanley Houghton. The Playgoers' Club instigated the idea of a memorial. A committee was formed to look into the matter. On it were: the Bishop of Manchester (J.E.C. Welldon) as Chairman; E. Acton (President of the Playgoers' Club); J.L. Paton (High Master of The Manchester Grammar School); E. Tootal Broadhurst (President of The Athenaeum);

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21. See H. Brighouse, The Manchester Drama, Sherratt and Hughes, 1917, p.78, and John Bull, 12 June 1932 (Brighouse Collection).
  22. Contract in the Stanley Houghton Collection.
  23. See Appendices.



F. Voyce (Secretary of the Playgoers' Club) and A.N. Monkhouse. Two ideas were considered: one was the founding of an annual prize or scholarship at The Manchester Grammar School or the University and the other was the placing of a tablet, subject to Miss Horniman's approval, in the Gaiety theatre. (24) By 8 June 1914 a decision was reached and a letter was released to the press:

*Sir,*

*There must be among your readers many who either knew the late Stanley Houghton or are admirers of his work. They will be interested to know that it has been decided to raise a privately subscribed memorial to the Lancashire dramatist's memory. For this purpose an influential committee .... has decided that the memorial shall take two forms:*

- (a) A Stanley Houghton Scholarship or Bursary at the Manchester Grammar School (which he attended) to stimulate the serious study of dramatic literature; and*
- (b) A small memorial tablet in one of the public institutions of this day.*

(The Manchester Guardian, 9 June 1914, p.9.)

Of interest is the fact that the above paper, seeing the importance of the memorial, devoted a leader to it in which it outlined Houghton's contribution to the development of dramatic literature:

*We would warmly commend to playgoers in Manchester and outside it, the scheme for commemorating the work of the late Stanley Houghton. His short life only allowed him to open a career. But, short as it was, he gave the theatre the first modern play, of any quality, in which Lancashire character and manners have been faithfully observed and skilfully made vivid, curious, and exciting to playgoers in all parts of the English-speaking world. It was a definite thing waiting to be done, and well worth doing, and he did it. By doing it he not only did a service to Lancashire, but he helped on the modern movement towards the right kind of localisation in imaginative literature ....*

*(9 June 1914, p.8.)*

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24. See The Manchester Guardian, and the Manchester Courier: 1 April 1914, in H.C. Vol.M.

By the beginning of 1915 the Committee was able to announce that Houghton's name was to be honoured in two ways: firstly by placing a memorial tablet in the Central Free Reference Library, Piccadilly, and secondly by establishing a scholarship at The Manchester Grammar School. The Library was in temporary buildings which had been opened in 1912 pending the construction of a new library (eventually to be the Central Reference Library, St. Peter's Sq.). However, the War caused a delay and the new building was not opened until 1934 when George VI and Queen Mary performed the ceremony. By then the temporary buildings had come to be known as the "*finest collection of library sheds in Europe*".<sup>(25)</sup>

The official unveiling ceremony of the memorial tablet took place on 10 February 1915. Almost every paper in the country covered the event. The Manchester Guardian carried an article (p.3), a leader (p.5) and a very large photograph of the occasion (p.5). The large plaque was inscribed:

WILLIAM STANLEY HOUGHTON  
OF MANCHESTER  
DRAMATIST  
1881-1913

"THE YOUNGER GENERATION IS  
BOUND TO WIN. THAT'S HOW  
THE WORLD GOES ON".

J. & J. WHITESIDE, MANC.<sup>(26)</sup>

- 
25. 'Manchester Central Library: notes and quotes on its history', Local History Section: ref: MSC 027.442/M.
26. The quotation is from The Perfect Cure, The Works, Vol.2, pp.241-42.

It was a very formal affair. The High Master of The Manchester Grammar School presided in the absence of Bishop Welldon. Present were the Lord Mayor, Miss Horniman, Arthur Bouchier, Violet Vanbrugh, Houghton's family and many more. J.L. Paton (The High Master) lamented the fact that they were met in days of war to commemorate a tragedy of peace-time. Miss Horniman then unveiled the memorial and the Lord Mayor accepted it on behalf of the City. Arthur Bouchier, in his eulogy, placed Houghton firmly within the history of dramatic literature by noting that originally it was believed that to be artistic London managers had to stage foreign drama:

*then Miss Horniman arrived with Stanley Houghton. It was a moment to be thankful for. Had our friend lived he would have been more than a worthy successor to Sir James Barrie. (27)*

The Bouchiers were in fact appearing in a revival of Houghton's play Pearls which they had brought to Manchester (the Hippodrome) at the instigation of the memorial committee.<sup>(28)</sup> It played all that week (see p.328).

Finally, the Chairman of the Libraries' Committee expressed the hope that the memorial

*would soon find a place not only worthier of Stanley Houghton himself, but of the City. (29)*

It was eventually moved to the present Central Reference Library when it opened in 1934. It is now to be found on the wall immediately behind the ticket counter on the fourth floor.

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27. The Manchester Guardian, 11 Feb.1915, H.C. Vol.N.

28. The Manchester Guardian reported that Bouchier "readily fell in with a suggestion that he should revive ... 'Pearls'". 6 Feb.1915, p.4.

29. Manchester City News, 13 Feb.1915, H.C. Vol.N.

The Houghton Memorial Scholarship was instituted at approximately the same time as the above. It recorded that:

*This scholarship was founded from funds raised to commemorate the name of Mr. Stanley Houghton, dramatist, an old boy of the school ... [It is] of the annual value of £10 [equivalent to £220 in 1981] and the object [is] to encourage the serious study of the drama. (30)*

The value of the prize at the time was high if one compares it with the annual school fee of say 1916: £24.<sup>(31)</sup> Originally it was awarded on the result of an essay but today it is awarded for the study of and interest in plays in general. The prize still remains at £10 today, having been awarded annually since its inception.

The ten or so years after Houghton's death saw many revivals of his works. The most poignant was that associated with the closure of the Gaiety which was given over almost completely to Houghton's plays during its final season. The Manchester Guardian (among others) connected the death of Houghton with the demise of the Gaiety: "*he died and now the Gaiety dies too*".<sup>(32)</sup> The final curtain went down on his two most popular plays: The Dear Departed and Hindle Wakes in May 1920. The moment was nostalgic:

*Houghton's father and mother [were] in the audience ... [which] was large. There was not a seat to spare in the popular parts, and in the gallery people were standing. The Company was called for again and again when the play ended. (33)*

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30. Information supplied by Mr. I. Bailey of The Manchester Grammar School.
31. ditto.
32. 17 May 1920, H.C. Vol.Q.
33. The Manchester Guardian, 30 May 1920, H.C. Vol.Q.

The press carried a photograph of the actress Anna Bethell (who played Fanny in the play) locking the Gaiety doors for the last time. (34)

Apart from the new impetus given by the cinema to his plays (see p.170) Houghton gradually faded from memory with intermittent revivals of Hindle Wakes. Even then it was the play that was remembered and not the author. Today its title is known but rarely, if ever, is the name Stanley Houghton.

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34. Manchester Dispatch, 30 May 1920, *ibid.* Next to this clipping Miss Horniman has written: *"This door fastens with a bar inside. There is no key-hole there"*.

## CONCLUSION

Stanley Houghton lived and worked through one of the most interesting periods of British dramatic and theatrical history. His entire life spanned almost exactly an era often held to be important for many reasons, particularly to the theatre: 1880-1914. From about 1880 British Drama "*emerged from the turgid and stale conventions of Romanticism*".<sup>(1)</sup> A tangible movement began in which changes were instigated in drama: greater emphasis on discussion rather than on melodramatic action; a modification or elimination of the hero-villain dichotomy; less of the contrived happy ending and less emphasis on the love triangle. In short there was a greater awareness of the environment and its influence which in turn affected the portrayals of characters on stage.

This new drama was conceived of in terms of realism or naturalism,<sup>(2)</sup> a reaction against the formulae of both Classicism and Romanticism with their known plot sequences; use of the confidante; use of suspense, misunderstandings, asides, coincidences, monologues and startling denouements; use of the past rather than the present; development of the action rather than of the character; declamations and speeches; no intrusion into reality and the interest in the general rather than in the particular. Naturalism expressed the belief that art was in essence "*a mimetic, objective representation*

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1. The Revels History of Drama in English: Vol.VII, op.cit. p.13.
  2. These two terms are basically alike but diverse views are held about each. See L.R. Furst and P.N. Kinne, Naturalism, (The Critical Idiom Series), Methuen, 1971.

*of outer reality in contrast to the imaginative, subjective trans-figurations practised by the Romantics".*<sup>(3)</sup> Such a reaction was perhaps best expressed by Zola in his Naturalism in the Theatre (1881): his major tenet was the lack of concern for the influence of the environment on character. If truth in drama was to be achieved then characters had to act in accordance with a combination of environment and temperament, his "*flesh and bones on the stage, taken from reality*". As I have shown, Houghton held and acted upon similar views. Indeed, like Ibsen, Houghton "*gave us not only ourselves, but ourselves in our own situations. The things that happen to his stage figures are the things that happen to us*".<sup>(4)</sup>

Such a movement stemmed from Europe. Antoine's Théâtre Libre (1887) set the pattern for this new drama and its consequent changes in the style of acting: it demonstrated how these new realistic plays were to be produced realistically. Its influence spread, particularly to Germany where Brahm's dramatic enterprise, Die Freie Bühne (1889), further developed Antoine's ideas. 1898 saw the creation of the Moscow Art Theatre and Stanislavsky's and Danchenko's contribution to the new drama. By 1891 London began to be influenced. There J.T. Grein opened his Independent Theatre which in turn encouraged the Vedrenne-Barker period (1904-07) at the Court Theatre. Meanwhile, Ireland had begun to encourage its own native realism by promoting local playwrights. From these British movements there emerged three significant people: Miss Horniman who had been greatly influenced by Ibsen and the theatre when in Germany and who had helped to establish

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3. Naturalism, op.cit. p.6.

4. G.B. Shaw, The Quintessence of Ibsenism (1891) in D. Russell (Ed), Selected Prose of Bernard Shaw, Constable, 1953, p.685.

the Abbey Theatre, Dublin; Iden Payne, the Abbey's director; and Lewis Casson who had been a part of the Vedrenne-Barker season at the Court. As I have shown Miss Horniman's and Payne's Gaiety Theatre finally encouraged Houghton to write professional plays and Casson's directing of Hindle Wakes consolidated Houghton's reputation as a playwright of renown so much so that even the Secretary of the Moscow Art Theatre praised it. With the Gaiety's prestige and Houghton's plays the development of repertory theatre continued in Liverpool, Birmingham and Glasgow. The later development of realistic drama in America, particularly in its Little Theatres, was as a result of influences like Professor G.P. Baker and playwrights like Edward Sheldon, both of whom were, as seen, involved with Houghton. Indeed, some of Houghton's plays were also instrumental in that development.

However, to see the development of realism in this country as a purely linear development from Europe would be incomplete. By the 1890's British drama was showing its own signs of regeneration and change. The success of writers like Gilbert and Wilde was built on a tradition begun by Congreve, Etherege and Sheridan. Pinero and H.A. Jones continued it in varying degrees and it reached a peak in Shaw. Houghton, as shown, added to it in his own way. The Victorian drama which sought to idealize life by presenting a model of behaviour and ethics that bore little resemblance to reality was replaced by an Edwardian drama that belonged to an age that questioned and doubted the values of orthodox beliefs and behaviour and was no longer afraid to say so: it began to show life as it was and achieved its popular appeal by introducing arguments and by treating subjects that had hitherto been considered unsuitable for theatrical presentation.



Houghton, as a dramatist conversant with all of these developments, was an example of such writers. His drama was not, however, an active social revolt as defined by Brustein.<sup>(5)</sup> It was a type of passive social revolt as his emphasis lay not in radical cures but rather in reconsideration. Social, political, moral and economic questions were aired impartially: compromise, adaptation and survival, whilst never openly promulgated by him, became the points of importance.

The value of Houghton's contribution to the drama of the period can be gauged when it is realised that at the turn of the century British drama meant London drama<sup>(6)</sup> and even there only a few gave the problem play a documentary realism and a social significance.<sup>(7)</sup> It was left to the repertory theatres to enhance the impetus, and in particular to what Hudson has called "*The Lancashire School*" with its influential "*naturalistic comedy of manners*".<sup>(8)</sup> Rowell has little doubt as to the influence of such drama. With particular reference to Miss Horniman and Houghton he notes that

*the repertory movement and the social drama which it fostered may perhaps be termed the avant-garde of the pre-war theatre in England.*<sup>(9)</sup>

or more precisely in Vernon's opinion,

*What Barrie, Shaw and Galsworthy were to the London movement, Synge, Houghton and Brighouse were to the Repertory movement.*<sup>(10)</sup>

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5. R.Brustein, The Theatre of Revolt, Little and Brown, 1962, pp.22-24.
  6. See F.Vernon, The Twentieth-Century Theatre, op.cit. p.37.
  7. L.Hudson, The English Stage 1850-1950, Harrap, 1951, p.155.
  8. *ibid.*
  9. G.Rowell, The Victorian Theatre : a survey, op.cit. p.139.
  10. The Twentieth-Century Theatre, op.cit. p.81.

Indeed, if repertory theatre was a major influence in the development of drama then Houghton's role in it becomes all the more significant because with Hindle Wakes he was regarded as "*the writer of their [repertory theatre] most successful play*",<sup>(11)</sup> a play which not only became "*identified in the public mind as the typical repertory play*" but also one which "*helped to change the course and policy of Miss Horniman's undertaking*".<sup>(12)</sup>

Houghton's contribution to the drama of the period and therefore his place in the development of drama in general lay in his ability to deal with humanity on the stage, not in any startling new way, but rather by developing a skilled dialogue which enabled an expression of inner conflicts, a rendering of deeper feelings: in this area he was a pioneer. Moreover, his faculty of observation enabled him to look at things anew, to deal with the commonplace in such a way as to give it a new lease of life on the stage. Akin to this was his stage craftsmanship, a skill developed, as shown, in his endless quest to find what would or would not be successful on the stage, much of which came to him as an amateur actor, as a critic and through his experiments in his early unpublished works. His skill, in a sentence, was that he took a fresh but humorous look at the everyday: he integrated realism with theatrical effectiveness. It is true that at times he imitated the best contemporary playwrights and writers yet he never imitated slavishly; he blended individual talents into a new whole and made them his own.

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11. J.E. Agate, Buzz, Buzz! Essays of the Theatre, Blom, 1969, p.99, (first pub. 1918).

12. Pogson, op.cit. p.125.

He also contributed to the development of drama in other ways: he helped to raise the standard and prestige of the one-act play from a mere curtain-raiser to a work of art in its own right; he made a contribution to the music-hall which at the time was being required to change its bill of fare, particularly the type of sketches it presented; he also added to the emerging status of the director and the actors by writing those types of plays in which ensemble acting was paramount. Indeed, the honesty of purpose and the fine perception of feeling and understanding of motives he infused into his plays, particularly in Hindle Wakes, also helped to bring about a change in attitude to sexual standards, particularly the double standard in sexual relationships, when at the time some better known playwrights were hesitant about writing such plays dealing with contemporary issues because of the censorship laws.

Hindle Wakes consolidated Houghton's reputation and by it he assured its place (but rarely his name) in dramatic history. In 1914 the renowned critic of The Manchester Guardian, C.E. Montague, assessed Houghton and his work in terms of the development of drama. His conclusion is most apposite:

*he gave the theatre the first modern play, of any quality, in which Lancashire character and manners have been faithfully observed and skilfully made vivid, curious and exciting to playgoers in all parts of the English speaking world. It was a definite thing waiting to be done, and well worth doing, and he did it. By doing it he not only did a service to Lancashire, but he helped on the modern movement towards the right kind of localisation in imaginative literature, a movement to which the success of the new Irish drama had already given an impetus. (13)*

Biographical accounts of writers who die young invariably speculate about what might have been, what greater works were yet to come. With Houghton, however, this need not be the case. One of the primary aims of this thesis was to trace his full literary output, something which has never before been completely or accurately documented. As the research also uncovered previously unknown and unpublished works of his early period it made it possible to do the very thing suggested by Anthony Ellis who, in 1914, noted that

*relatively small as was his output, a critical survey of the whole reveals its author as a dramatist of singular force and a daring and original thinker; a man who had something new to say, of which the exact value cannot be justly estimated until all its aspects be collated. (14)*

Here is such a collation and valuation. Concomitant with it is that necessary study of his life and the conditions in which he worked as a writer: the influences and inspirations behind his works which in turn involved a consideration of Manchester and its heritage, particularly its dramatic history and standing along with the role The Manchester Guardian played in it. Considered in total, this study of the life and literary career of W. Stanley Houghton now enables a correction of those erroneous facts and judgments recorded in the various reference books and histories of drama. It is also a contribution towards closing that gap which was identified so well by George Rowell and whose characterization of it opened this thesis: Houghton helped to shape the course of English drama and is therefore a part of the pattern of English theatre. To ignore him is to neglect the whole as well as the parts.

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14. The English Review, op.cit. p.275.

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(N.B. Nos. 3-6 were compiled from the Index to Literary Contributions: Vols. 390, 388/8, 388/9. Location: University of Manchester Archives.)

Houghton was paid approximately £172 (£4,670 in 1981) for his articles and reviews to The Manchester Guardian.

APPENDIX 1

THE WORKS OF STANLEY HOUGHTON:

	<u>PLAYS : (acts in brackets)</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>YEAR WRITTEN</u>	<u>DATE FIRST PERFORMED</u>
1	<u>Maria</u> (1)	NE	c. 1900	-
2	<u>After Naseby</u> (1)	NE	c. 1901	-
3	<u>The Last Shot</u> (1)	NE	c. 1901	-
4	<u>The Blue Phial</u> (1)	NE	c. 1901	-
*5	<u>Adam Moss : Bachelor</u> (3)	SH (MS)	c. 1902	-
*6	<u>Midnight Visitors : a nocturne</u> (1)	SH (MS)	c. 1906	-
*7	<u>The General's Word</u> (1)	SH	c. 1906	-
8	<u>The Intriguers</u> (4)	SH; MF	1906	19 Oct. 1906.
9	<u>The Reckoning</u> (1)	LCP (MS); MF	1907	22 July 1907.
10	<u>The Old Testament and the New</u> (1)	TW 3.	1907/8	22 June 1914.
11	<u>The Dear Departed</u> (1)	TW 3;P;T;A;	1908	2 Nov. 1908.
12	<u>Independent Means</u> (4)	TW 1;P;A;	1908	30 Aug. 1909.
13	<u>Marriages in the Making</u> (3)	TW 1.	1909	Not performed.
14	<u>The Younger Generation</u> (3)	TW 1;P;A;	1909	21 Nov. 1910.
15	<u>The Master of the House</u> (1)	TW 3;T;A;	1909	26 Sept. 1910.
16	<u>Ginger</u> (4)	SH (MS); MF	1910	19 July 1913.
17	<u>The Fifth Commandment</u> (1)	TW 3;A;	1911	1913 (U.S.A.)
18	<u>Fancy Free</u> (1)	TW 3; P;A;	1911	6 Nov. 1911.
19	<u>Partners</u> (3)	TW 2.	1911	19 April 1915.
20	<u>Hindle Wakes</u> (3)	TW 2;P;T;A;	1911	16 June 1912.
21	<u>The Hillarys</u> (3)	EPL	1911/12	30 April 1915.
22	<u>The Perfect Cure</u> (3)	TW 2.	1912	17 June 1913.
23	<u>Phipps</u> (1)	TW 3;A;	1912	19 Nov. 1912.
24	<u>Pearls</u> (1)	SH;MF	1912	20 Dec. 1912.
25	<u>Trust the People</u> (3)	SH;MF	1912	6 Feb. 1913.
*26	<u>The Weather</u> (3)	SH (only 18 pages survive)	1913	-

KEY \* : Previously unknown.

NE : No longer extant.

MS : Manuscript.

Key continued overleaf:

- P;T;A : Published separately; Translated; Anthology: - see p.420 for details.
- SH : The Stanley Houghton Collection, University of Salford Library (Appendix 2).
- MF : Microfilm (in SH).
- LCP : Lord Chamberlain's Stage Plays : The British Library, Dept. of MSS.
- TW : The Works of Stanley Houghton, H. Brighouse (Ed), Constable, 1914. Number indicates volume.
- EPL : Eccles Public Library, Greater Manchester : The Brighouse Collection.

	<u>PROSE:</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>DATE WRITTEN/</u>
			<u>PRINTED/</u> <u>PUBLISHED</u>
*1	<u>A Hazard for a Fortune</u>	SH	c. 1902.
2	<u>The Workings of Providence</u>	GA	1909.
3	<u>Mr. Ovens</u>	MG;TW 3;	28 Oct. 1909.
4	<u>Out of the Season</u>	MG;TW 3;	3 May 1910.
5	<u>Other People's Houses</u>	MG;TW 3;	28 June 1910.
6	<u>Hawthorn Lodge</u>	MG;TW 3;	17 Jan. 1911.
7	<u>Two Breton Tales</u> (Translations)	MG	21 April 1911.
8	<u>Fritz's</u>	MG;; TW 3;	12 May 1911.
9	<u>Anniversaries and Old Letters</u>	MG; TW 3:	8 Nov. 1911.
10	<u>Hanover House</u>	MG; TW 3;	17 May 1912.
11	<u>The Teashop</u>	MG;; TW 3;	28 April 1913.
12	<u>The Dying Lie</u>	TW3.	1914.
13	<u>The Time of His Life</u>	TW3.	1914.
14	<u>Grey</u>	TW3.	1914.
15	<u>Revolt of Mr. Reddy</u>	TW3.	1914.
16	<u>Life</u> (an unfinished novel).	TW3.	c. Dec. 1912- June 1913.

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KEY

- \* :Previously unknown.
- GA :Gaiety Christmas Annual, 1909.
- MG :The Manchester Guardian (See Appendix 3).
- TW :The Works of Stanley Houghton, H. Brighouse (Ed), Constable, 1914. Number indicates volume.
- SH :The Stanley Houghton Collection, University of Salford Library (Appendix 2).



INDIVIDUAL PUBLICATIONS; TRANSLATIONS; ANTHOLOGIES:

Individual Publications:

The Dear Departed, French, 1910 (still in print).

Independent Means, French, 1911.

The Younger Generation, French, 1910.

Hindle Wakes, Sidgwick and Jackson, 1912.

Fancy Free, French, 1912.

Translations:

The Dear Departed :

French : Defunt Merry, Louis Pennequin, Paris, 1911.

Welsh : Yr Ymadawedig, R. Ellis Jones, French, 1929.

Scottish : 'Twixt Cup and Lip, Felix Fair, French, 1937

The Master of the House :

French : Le Maître de la Maison, Louis Pennequin, Paris, 1911.

Welsh : Meistr y Ty, J. Ellis Williams, French, 1929.

Scottish : A Tartar Caught, Felix Fair, French, 1937.

Hindle Wakes :

Czech. : Tovární Prázdniny, Zora Spolecnost  
S.R.O. Nakladatelství Umělecký Zavodv  
Praze-Kaččině, n.d. (copy in Manchester  
Central Reference Library).

Anthologies:

- A) Five One-Act Plays, French, 1913:  
The Dear Departed; The Master of the House;  
Fancy Free; Phipps; The Fifth Commandment.
- B) Twenty-Four One-Act Plays, Everyman's Library,  
1939, No. 947:  
The Dear Departed.
- C) Dickinson and Crawford (Eds), Contemporary Drama :  
English and American, Boston, 1925.  
Hindle Wakes.

- D) G. Savory (Ed), Granada's Manchester Plays,  
Manchester U P, 1962:  
Independent Means; The Younger Generation.
  - E) J.W. Marriott (Ed), One-Act Plays of Today,  
Harrap, 1926 (3rd Series):  
The Master of the House.
  - F) Seven Famous One-Act Plays, Penguin, 1937:  
The Dear Departed.
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APPENDIX 2

THE STANLEY HOUGHTON COLLECTION,  
UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD LIBRARY:

PLAYS :

Adam Moss : Bachelor

3 acts. c. 1902. Handwritten in two exercise-books, pp. 121. Probably Houghton's first three-act play. Not published and previously unknown.

The Intriguers

4 acts. Melodrama in bound typescript. Written in collaboration with Frank G. Nasmith. Produced at The Manchester Athenaeum, October 1906. A programme, bound in the volume, includes both authors in the cast list. Not published.

The General's Word

1 act. c. 1906. Two typed copies, each bearing a sticker of The International Copyright Bureau, Houghton's eventual management company in London. Both copies give the author's name as William Stanley; one has his full name signed at the bottom. Not published and previously unknown.

Midnight Visitors : a nocturne in one-act

Manuscript, c. 1906. Not published and previously unknown.

Ginger

Manuscript. 4 acts. A comedy written March/December, 1910. Excluded from The Works but acted professionally. Inspired by H.G. Wells's Kipps (1905). Includes the preliminary outline, part of which is on a letter from Iden Payne. Not published.

Pearls

1 act play, October 1912. Written for the actor-manager Arthur Bouchier and his wife Violet Vanbrugh. Excluded from The Works. The cover reveals its original title The Minion of the Law. Also bears alterations in the playwright's hand as well as another's, perhaps Bouchier's. Unpublished.

Trust the People

3 act play, late 1912. Written for Bouchier. Acted professionally but excluded from The Works. Contains alterations in Houghton's hand. Includes a letter dated from Bouchier's theatre, the Strand, to Houghton's mother returning the play in the 1920's. Houghton's last complete play. Unpublished.

The Weather

3 act comedy. Written in Paris, May-June 1913.  
Only 18 pages survive; Houghton typed "First Copy"  
on it. His final play. Previously unknown.

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Plays on Microfilm:

The Intriguers; The Reckoning; Ginger; Pearls;  
Trust the People.

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CONTRACTS:

HINDLE WAKES :

1. A.E.F. Horniman, rights, 1912.
2. Sidgwick and Jackson Ltd., publication rights, 1912.
3. W.A. Brady, U.S.A. rights, 1912.
4. Performance in Calcutta, 1916.
5. Samuel French Ltd. acting rights, 1927.
6. Executors, H. Brighthouse and Constable Ltd., to turn the play into a novel, 1927.
7. Motion Picture Rights with Gaumont Ltd., 1931.

OTHER PLAYS :

1. The Dear Departed: For performance by Hilda Englund (New York, Norway, Sweden, Denmark), 1909.
2. The [Perfect] Cure: For performance by Frederick Harrison, 1912.
3. Fancy Free: For performance by William A. Brady (U.S.A.) 1912.
4. Ginger: For performance by E. Percy and K. Graeme, 1913.
5. The Hillarys: For performance by African Theatres Trust Ltd. (S. Africa), 1915.
6. Phipps: Film Rights with M.G.M., 1928.

TO WRITE PLAYS :

1. Trust the People and Phipps for Arthur Bouchier, 1912.
2. A Play (title not specified) for Cyril Maude, 1912.  
(Houghton probably offered The Perfect Cure to Maude to meet this contract. Maude apparently rejected it and Houghton then offered it to Frederick Harrison.)

PHOTOGRAPHS :

- A) HINDLE WAKES : 27 black and white photographs (11½ x 9½) taken at Cyril Maude's Theatre, The Playhouse, London in August 1912. Mounted and in a presentation album bearing the play's title (with a programme inside the front cover). They show:

Ada King as Mrs. Hawthorn.  
Leonard Mudie as Christopher Hawthorn.  
Edyth Goodall as Fanny Hawthorn.  
Daisy England as Mrs. Jeffcote.  
Herbert Lomas as Nathaniel Jeffcote.  
J.V. Bryant as Alan Jeffcote.  
Edward Landor as Sir Timothy Farrar.  
Jane Savile as Beatrice Farrar.  
Hilda Davies as Ada.

- B) THE YOUNGER GENERATION : 42 black and white photographs (11½ x 9½) taken by The Daily Mirror at the Haymarket Theatre, London in November 1912. They show:

Stanley Drewitt as James Henry Kennion.  
Ada King as Mrs. Kennion.  
Hilda Davies as Maggie.  
J.V. Bryant as Reggie Kennion.  
Caroline Bayley as Grace Kennion.  
Nigel Playfair as Thomas Kennion.  
Norman Page as Mr. Leadbitter.  
Luke Forster as Mr. Fowle.  
J. Woodall-Birde as Arthur Kennion.  
Iris Crowe as Mrs. Hannah Kennion.  
Ewan Brook as Clifford Rawson.

MISCELLANEOUS :

1. A Hazard For a Fortune : short story c. 1902. Typed.  
Previously unknown.
2. Contract between Houghton's father, Brighthouse, Samuel French Ltd. and Constable to edit The Works of Stanley Houghton, 1914, in 3 vols.
3. Letter from I.C.B. to Houghton's father, 4 Nov. 1914, announcing percentage royalties for HINDLE WAKES from the African Theatres Trust Ltd., South Africa.
4. Signed letter to Houghton from B. Iden Payne concerning The Younger Generation, 29th March 1910.
5. Letter from Bouchier's theatre, the Strand, to Houghton's mother returning Trust the People, 1920's.
6. Letter from I.C.B. concerning the acting rights for Hindle Wakes and Mr. E. Heys, 1927.
7. Letter to Houghton's executors announcing receipt of payment for film rights of Hindle Wakes from Gaumont. Mention is also made of the costs incurred for the court case involving The Younger Generation, 1931.
8. PRINTED FIRST EDITIONS :  
The Dear Departed, 1910.  
The Younger Generation, 1910.  
Defunt Merry, 1911 (French version of The Dear Departed).  
The Works of Stanley Houghton (3 vols.) 1914.  
'Twixt Cup and Lip, 1937 (Scottish version of The Dear Departed).

APPENDIX 3 :

SPECIAL ARTICLES (INCLUDING 'BACK-PAGE' ARTICLES)

BY STANLEY HOUGHTON IN  
THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>NATURE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<u>Our Amateur Actors.</u>	Personal viewpoint of the amateur actor.	31 Aug. 1905, p.4.
<u>Mr. Ovens.</u>	Fiction.	28 Oct. 1909, p.14. and <u>The Works</u> , Vol. 3, p. 157.
<u>Algy in Wonderland.</u> (with all necessary acknowledgements) with sketch by H.Y. Collier.	Political satire in verse. 36 lines.	15 Dec. 1909, p.5. and D. Ayerst, <u>Guardian: Biography of A Newspaper</u> . Collins, 1971, p. 327. 12 lines only. Wrongly dated as 1910 and sketch attributed erroneously to Houghton.
<u>The Englishman Tariff 'Reform' Style.</u> (With Apologies to Sir W.S. Gilbert) with sketch by H.Y. Collier.	Political satire in verse. 16 lines.	22 Dec. 1909, p.5.
<u>The Rime of the Ancient Ancestor.</u> with sketch by H.Y. Collier.	Political satire in verse. 30 lines.	24 Dec. 1909, p.5.
<u>The Accident of Birth.</u> with sketch by H.Y. Collier.	Political satire in verse. 20 lines.	1 January, 1910, p.5.
<u>Protecting British Industries.</u> with sketch by H.Y. Collier.	Political satire in verse. 32 lines.	5 January, 1910, p.5. and quoted in full in <u>The Works</u> , Vol. I, pp.XIII-IV.
<u>Our Would-be Rulers.</u> <u>Song: To the Peers of England (after Shelley).</u> with sketch by H.Y. Collier.	Political satire in verse. 24 lines.	8 January, 1910, p.7.
<u>What are we coming to?</u> <u>The Two Voices.</u> with sketch by H.Y. Collier.	Political satire in verse. 36 lines.	11 January, 1910, p.7.



<u>TITLE</u>	<u>NATURE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<u>Out of the Season.</u>	Fiction.	3 May, 1910, p.14 and <u>The Works</u> , Vol. 3, p.161.
<u>Other People's Houses.</u>	Fiction.	28 June, 1910, p.16, and <u>The Works</u> , Vol. 3, p.166.
<u>Hawthorn Lodge.</u>	Fiction.	17 January 1911, p.14, and <u>The Works</u> , Vol. 3, p. 171.
Two Breton Tales: 1. <u>Aboard the Jeune</u> Mathilde. 2. <u>The City of Is.</u>	Translations by Stanley Houghton from <u>La Légende de la Mort</u> <u>Chez Les Bretons-</u> <u>Armoricaains</u> , by Anatole Le Braz. (1893) French folklore and mythology (the supernatural).	21 April 1911, p.14. (see p.365 of thesis).
<u>Fritz's.</u>	Fiction.	12 May 1911, p. 14, and <u>The Works</u> , Vol. 3, p. 176.
<u>Anniversaries and Old</u> <u>Letters.</u>	Fiction.	8 November 1911, p.16, and <u>The Works</u> , Vol. 3, p. 181.
<u>Hanover House.</u> (submitted with title <u>Chains</u> by Houghton but changed by the news- paper).	Fiction.	17 May 1912, p. 16, and <u>The Works</u> , Vol. 3, p. 186.
<u>The Teashop.</u>	Fiction.	28 April 1913, p. 16, and <u>The Works</u> , Vol. 3, p. 191.

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TOTAL = 17

APPENDIX 4 :

PLAYS REVIEWED BY STANLEY HOUGHTON IN THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN:

<u>PLAY</u>	<u>AUTHOR(S)</u>	<u>THEATRE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<u>My Sweetheart.</u>	Musical comedy by F.G. Maeder and W. Gill.	Gaiety.	13 Nov. 1906, p. 7.
<u>Mr. Popple of Ippleton.</u>	P.A. Rubens.	Gaiety.	20 Nov. 1906, p. 7.
<u>The Walls of Jericho.</u>	A. Sutro.	Gaiety.	27 Nov. 1906, p. 7.
<u>Beauty and The Barge.</u>	W.W. Jacobs and L.N. Parker.	Prince's.	4 Dec. 1906, p. 7.
<u>Macbeth.</u>	Shakespeare.	Royal.	7 Dec. 1906, p. 6.
<u>Babes in the Wood.</u>	Victor Stevens.	Royal.	26 Dec. 1906, p. 5.
<u>Babes in the Wood.</u>	Victor Stevens.	Royal.	1 Jan. 1907, p. 5.
<u>Mother Goose.</u>	K.O. Samuel.	Gaiety.	6 Feb. 1907, p. 5.
<u>The Freedom of Suzanne.</u>	C. Gordon-Lennox.	Gaiety.	12 March 1907, p. 7.
<u>Othello.</u>	Shakespeare.	Queen's.	19 March, 1907, p. 14.
<u>David Garrick.</u>	T.W. Robertson.	Gaiety.	2 April 1907, p. 4. Wrongly recorded in <u>Index to Literary Contributions</u> as 1 April 1907.
<u>Edmund Kean.</u>	Adapted from the Alexandre Dumas (père) novel by T. Edgar Pemberton.	Gaiety.	3 April 1907, p. 5.
<u>School for Scandal.</u>	Sheridan.	Gaiety.	4 April 1907, p. 7.
<u>She Stoops to Conquer.</u>	Goldsmith.	Gaiety.	5 April 1907, p. 6.

<u>PLAY</u>	<u>AUTHOR(S)</u>	<u>THEATRE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<u>The Angel of Unrest.</u>	R.A. Greene.	Gaiety.	16 April 1907, p. 14.
<u>All-of-A-Sudden Peggy.</u>	E. Denny.	Prince's.	30 April 1907, p. 8.
<u>The Sleigh Bells.</u>	V. Crummles.	Gaiety.	11 June 1907, p. 7.
<u>A Bunch of Violets.</u>	S. Grundy.	Queen's.	18 June 1907, p. 14.
<u>The Light that Failed.</u>	Adapted from the ) Kipling novel by ) H.V. Neilson. )	Queen's. )	25 June 1907, p. 7.
<u>The Money Spinner.</u>	A. Pinero. )	)	
<u>Captain Swift.</u>	C. Hadden Chambers.	Queen's.	9 July 1907, p. 14.
<u>A Fool's Paradise.</u>	S. Grundy.	Queen's.	16 July 1907, p. 14.
<u>The Pocket Miss Hercules.</u>	J. Storer Clouston.	Royal.	10 Sept. 1907, p.7.
<u>The Walls of Jericho.</u>	A. Sutro.	Prince's.	24 Sept. 1907, p.7.
<u>The Lyons Mail.</u>	C. Reade and T. Taylor.	Royal.	26 Sept. 1907, p. 7.
<u>David Copperfield.</u>	Adapted by John Brougham.	Gaiety.	1 Oct. 1907, p. 12.
<u>David Garrick.</u>	T.W. Robertson.	Royal.	7 Oct. 1907, p. 7.
<u>Essex.</u>	A.C. Calmour.	Queen's.	8 Oct. 1907, p.7.
<u>The Scarlet Pimpernel.</u>	Baroness E. Orczy.	Royal.	15 Oct. 1907, p. 14.
<u>Still Waters Run Deep.</u>	T. Taylor.	Prince's.	23 Oct. 1907, p. 7.
<u>Sweet Nancy.</u>	Adapted from the R. Broughton novel <u>Nancy</u> by R. Buchanan.	Royal.	29 Oct. 1907, p.7.
<u>Miss Tommy.</u>	J.K. Jerome.	Royal.	1 Nov. 1907, p. 6.

<u>PLAY</u>	<u>AUTHOR(S)</u>	<u>THEATRE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<u>Trilby.</u>	Adapted from the ) G. Du Maurier novel ) by Beerbohm Tree. )	Royal.	8 Nov. 1907, p. 6.
<u>The Man Who Was.</u>	Adapted from the ) Kipling novel by ) F.K. Peile. )		
<u>The Night of the Party.</u>	W. Grossmith.	Gaiety.	19 Nov. 1907, p. 9, and partly quoted in <u>The Works</u> , Vol. I. pp xxx-xxxi.
<u>Beauty and The Barge.</u>	W.W. Jacobs and L.N. Parker.	Gaiety.	26 Nov. 1907, p. 8.
<u>The Taming of the Shrew.</u>	Shakespeare.	Royal.	28 Nov. 1907, p. 7.
<u>She Stoops to Conquer.</u>	Goldsmith.	Royal.	30 Nov. 1907, p. 6.
<u>When Knights Were Bold.</u>	Charles Marlowe. (pseud. of Harriet Jay.)	Prince's.	3 Dec. 1907, p.6.
<u>Rosmersholm.</u>	Ibsen.	Stockport Amateur.	20 Dec. 1907, p.8.
<u>Macbeth.</u>	Shakespeare.	Royal.	10 March 1908, p.7.
<u>Hamlet.</u>	Shakespeare.	Royal.	14 March 1908, p.8.
<u>The Merchant of Venice.</u>	Shakespeare.	Royal.	17 March 1908, p.14.
<u>Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush.</u>	Adapted from the Ian Maclaren story by Dr. Watson.	Royal.	19 March 1908, p. 10.
<u>The Light that Failed.</u>	Adapted from the Kipling novel by H.V. Neilson.	Prince's.	20 March 1908, p. 14.
<u>Othello.</u>	Shakespeare.	Prince's.	21 March 1908, p. 9.
<u>With Edged Tools.</u>	H. Armitage.	Gaiety.	24 March 1908, p.8.
<u>As You Like It.</u>	Shakespeare.	Queen's.	25 March 1908, p. 12.

<u>PLAY</u>	<u>AUTHOR(S)</u>	<u>THEATRE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<u>Billy Rotterford's Descent</u> (a revised version of <u>Among the Brigands</u> ).	'R.Lascelles' (W. Grossmith)	Royal.	14 April 1908, p. 9.
<u>Hamlet</u> .	Shakespeare.	Royal.	14 April 1908, but not printed. Houghton allowed 10/6, however.
<u>Much Ado About Nothing</u> .	Shakespeare.	Recreation Rooms, Every Street, Ancoats.	7 May 1908, p. 14.
<u>The Only Way</u> .	Adapted from <u>A Tale of Two Cities</u> by Sir J. Martin-Harvey.	Royal.	12 May 1908, p. 14.
<u>Diana of Dobson's</u> .	C.M. Hamilton.	Prince's.	19 May 1908, p. 14.
<u>Rosmersholm</u> .	Ibsen.	Prince's.	30 May 1908, p. 8 and <u>The Works</u> , Vol. 3, p. 139.
<u>The Second in Command</u> .	R. Marshall.	Royal.	2 June 1908, p. 7.
<u>David Garrick</u> .	T.W. Robertson.	Prince's.	9 June 1908, p. 5.
<u>School for Scandal</u> .	Sheridan.	Prince's.	10 June 1908, p. 6.
<u>Scrooge</u> .	Adapted from <u>A Christmas Carol</u> by J.C. Buckstone.)	Prince's.)	22 June 1908, p. 10.
<u>Sweet and Twenty</u> .	F. Dell.)	)	
<u>The Prince and the Beggar Maid</u> .	A. Hope. (pseud. of Sir A. Hope Hawkins).	Junction.	1 Sept. 1908, p.6.
<u>Hamlet</u> .	Shakespeare.	Prince's.	29 Sept. 1908, p. 9.
<u>Louis XI</u> .	D. Boucicault.	Prince's.	2 Oct. 1908, p.9.
<u>The Bells</u> .	Adapted from L. Lewis's <u>The Polish Jew</u> by E. Erckmann and A. Chatrian.	Prince's.	3 Oct. 1908, p. 10.

<u>PLAY</u>	<u>AUTHOR(S)</u>	<u>THEATRE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<u>The Walls of Jericho.</u>	A. Sutro.	Royal.	13 Oct. 1908, p. 8.
<u>Diana of Dobson's.</u>	C.M.Hamilton.	Royal.	10 Nov. 1908, p. 7.
<u>When Knights were Bold.</u>	Charles Marlowe (pseud. of Harriet Jay).	Prince's.	24 Nov. 1908, p.6.
<u>The Merchant of Venice.</u>	Shakespeare.	) Royal:	26 Nov. 1908, p. 10.
<u>Twelfth Night.</u>	Shakespeare.		
<u>School for Scandal.</u>	Sheridan.	Royal.	28 Nov. 1908, p. 8.
<u>The Magistrate.</u>	A.W. Pinero.	Prince's.	5 Dec. 1908, p. 11.
<u>Man and Superman.</u>	G.B. Shaw.	Prince's.	8 Dec. 1908, p. 7.
<u>Arms and the Man.</u>	G.B. Shaw.	Prince's.	10 Dec. 1908, p. 7.
<u>Hedda Gabbler.</u>	Ibsen.	Gaiety.	16 Dec. 1908, p. 10.
<u>An Enemy of the People.</u>	Ibsen.	Stockport Amateur.	13 Jan. 1909, p. 9.
<u>Peter Pan.</u>	J.M. Barrie.	Prince's.	31 March 1909, p. 8 and <u>The Works</u> , Vol. 3, p. 143.
<u>Brewster's Millions.</u>	W. Smith and B. Ongley.	Prince's.	27 April 1909, p. 14.
<u>Diana of Dobson's.</u>	C.M. Hamilton.	Royal.	4 May 1909, p. 10.
<u>Lady Frederick.</u>	W.S. Maugham.	Prince's.	11 May 1909, p. 14.
<u>Claudian.</u>	H. Hermann and W.G. Wills.	Royal.	18 May 1909, p. 7.
<u>A Man's Shadow.</u>	R. Buchanan.	Royal.	27 May 1909, p. 12.
<u>Widowers' Houses.</u>	G.B. Shaw.	Gaiety.	1 June 1909, p. 5.
<u>Divorçons.</u>	V. Sardou.	Royal.	8 June 1909, p. 7.

<u>PLAY</u>	<u>AUTHOR(S)</u>	<u>THEATRE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<u>You Never Can Tell.</u>	G.B. Shaw.	Prince's.	21 Sept. 1909, p. 14.
<u>Henry of Navarre.</u>	W. Devereux.	Royal.	28 Sept. 1909, p. 9.
<u>Monna Vanna.</u>	M. Maeterlinck.	Stockport Amateur.	21 Oct. 1909, p. 7.
<u>Monsieur de Paris.</u>	A. Ramsey and R. de Cordova.	Hippodrome.	16 Nov. 1909, p. 4.
<u>Paid in Full.</u>	E. Walters.	Royal.	30 Nov. 1909, p. 7.
<u>Cupid and The Styx.</u>	M.J. Sackville.	Gaiety.	7 Dec. 1909, p. 6.
<u>As You Like It.</u>	Shakespeare.	Royal.	8 Dec. 1909, p. 7.
<u>The Taming of the Shrew.</u>	Shakespeare.	Royal.	10 Dec. 1909, p. 14.
<u>Little Hans Andersen.</u>	B. Hood.	Gaiety.	28 Dec. 1909, p. 4, and <u>The Works, Vol. 3,</u> p. 150.
<u>David Garrick.</u>	T.W. Robertson.	Prince's.	26 April 1910, p. 14.
<u>The Road to Ruin.</u>	T. Holcroft.	Prince's.	28 April 1910, p. 14.
<u>The Chorus Lady.</u>	J. Forbes.	Prince's.	17 May 1910, p. 6.
<u>As You Like It.</u>	Shakespeare.	Old Trafford.	5 July 1910, p. 9.
<u>Those Terrible Twins.</u>	L. Bantock.	Prince's.	23 Aug. 1910, p.7.
<u>The New Lady Bantock.</u>	J.K. Jerome. (originally entitled <u>Fanny and the Servant Problem</u> ).	Prince's.	30 Aug. 1910, p. 7.
<u>Is Marriage a Failure?</u>	H. Collier and F.H. Dudley.	Prince's.	2 Sept. 1910, p. 7.
<u>Henry of Navarre.</u>	W. Devereux.	Royal.	6 Sept. 1910, p. 6.

<u>PLAY</u>	<u>AUTHOR(S)</u>	<u>THEATRE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<u>Smith.</u>	W.S. Maugham.	Prince's.	13 Sept. 1910, p. 7 and <u>The Works</u> , Vol. 3, p. 147.
<u>The Eternal Question.</u>	H. Caine.	Prince's.	27 Sept. 1910, p. 7.
<u>The Bishop's Son.</u>	H. Caine.	Prince's.	28 Sept. 1910, p. 6.
<u>Sir Walter Raleigh.</u>	W. Devereux.	Prince's.	4 Oct. 1910, p. 7.
<u>The Naked Truth.</u>	'G. Paston' (E.M. Symonds) and W.B. Maxwell.	Prince's.	11 Oct. 1910. p. 7.
<u>Katawampus.</u>	Judge E.A. Parry and L. Calvert.	Gaiety.	26 Dec. 1910, p. 4. Month and year only given in <u>Index to Literary Contributions.</u>
<u>The Knight of the Burning Pestle.</u>	F. Beaumont and J. Fletcher.	Gaiety.	31 Jan. 1911, p. 7.
<u>The Thunderbolt.</u>	A.W. Pinero.	Manchester Athenaeum.	27 Feb. 1911, p. 14.
<u>Tantalizing Tommy.</u>	M. Morton.	Prince's.	7 March 1911, p. 7.
<u>Lords and Masters.</u>	J. Byrne.	Gaiety.	23 May 1911, p. 16.
<u>Just to Get Married.</u>	C.M. Hamilton.	Royal.	30 May 1911, p. 16.
<u>In Old Kentucky.</u>	C.T. Dazey and A. Shirley.	Royal.	29 Aug. 1911, p. 9.
<u>The Speckled Band.</u>	A. Conan Doyle.	Prince's.	5 Sept. 1911, p. 14.
<u>A Member of Tattersall's.</u>	H.S. Browning.	Prince's.	10 Oct. 1911, p. 16.
<u>Inconstant George.</u>	G.B. Unger.	Prince's.	5 Dec. 1911, p. 11.
<u>Arms and the Man.</u>	G.B. Shaw.	Gaiety.	5 March 1912, p. 10.
<u>The Shepherd.</u>	C.A. Forrest.	Liverpool Rep.	12 March 1912, p. 8.



<u>PLAY</u>	<u>AUTHOR(S)</u>	<u>THEATRE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<u>You Never Can Tell.</u>	G.B. Shaw.	Gaiety.	7 May 1912, p. 9.
<u>Rosmersholm.</u>	Ibsen.	Gaiety.	18 May, 1912, p. 12.
<u>Our Boys.</u>	H.J. Byron.	Gaiety.	21 May 1912, p. 8.
<u>Romeo and Juliet.</u>	Shakespeare.	Prince's.	22 May 1912, p. 7, and <u>The Works</u> , Vol. 1, pp xxxii-xxxiii.
<u>Macbeth.</u>	Shakespeare.	Prince's.	24 May 1912, p. 8.
<u>The Follies.</u>	H.G. Pélissier.	Prince's.	28 May 1912, p. 12.
<u>Wonderful Grandmamma and the Wand of Youth.</u>	H. Chapin.	Gaiety.	27 Dec. 1912, p. 4.

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TOTAL = 123

APPENDIX 5 :

BOOKS REVIEWED BY STANLEY HOUGHTON IN THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN:

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>AUTHOR</u>	<u>PUBLISHER</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<u>Diana of Dobson's.</u>	Cicely Hamilton.	Collier & Co., 1908.	15 July 1908, p. 5.
<u>An Actor's Story.</u>	Bransby Williams.	Chapman & Hall, 1909.	16 April 1909, p. 5.
<u>A Stepson of Fortune.</u>	Henry Murray.	Chapman & Hall, 1909.	11 May 1909, p. 5.
<u>The Actress.</u>	Louise C. Hale.	Constable, 1909.	30 June 1909, p.5.
<u>Johnny Lewison.</u>	A.E. Jacomb.	Andrew Melrose, 1909.	29 Sept. 1909, p. 5.
<u>Trial by Marriage.</u>	W.S. Jackson.	John Lane, 1909.	20 Oct. 1909, p. 5.
<u>Beyond Man's Strength.</u>	M. Hartley.	Heinemann, 1909.	10 Nov. 1909, p. 5.
<u>In the Shade.</u>	Valentine Hawtrey.	Murray, 1909.	8 Dec. 1909, p. 5.
<u>Historical Plays for Children.</u>	Amice Macdonell.	Allen & Sons, 1909.	30 Dec. 1909, p. 5.
<u>Wrack.</u>	Maurice Drake.	Duckworth & Co., 1910.	23 Feb. 1910, p. 5 and <u>The Works</u> , Vol. I, pccxiii.
<u>The Goddess Girl.</u>	Dorothea Deakin.	Cassell, 1910.	2 March, 1910, p. 5.
<u>The Exiles of Faloo.</u>	Barry Pain.	Methuen, 1910.	23 March, 1910, p. 5.
<u>Piano and I : Further Reminiscences.</u>	George Grossmith.	Arrowsmith, 1910.	28 March 1910, p. 10. Headed 'The Gossip of a Humourist'.
<u>Cavanagh : Forest Ranger.</u>	Hamlin Garland.	Harper & Bros., 1910.	20 April 1910, p. 5.
<u>Corporal Sam and Other Stories.</u>	A.T. Quiller-Couch.	Smith, Elder, 1910.	4 May 1910, p. 5. Headed 'Q's New Volume'.
<u>The O'Flynn.</u>	J.H. McCarthy.	Hurst & Blackett, 1910.	25 May 1910, p.5.

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>AUTHOR</u>	<u>PUBLISHER</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<u>A Prisoner in Spain.</u>	William Caine.	Greening & Co., 1910.	25 May 1910, p. 5.
<u>Oxford Amateurs.</u>	Alan Mackinnon.	Chapman & Hall, 1910.	17 June 1910, p. 5.
<u>Lydia.</u>	E. Hopkins.	Constable, 1910.	29 June 1910, p. 5.
<u>Vocation.</u>	L. Grant Duff.	Murray, 1910.	17 Aug. 1910, p. 3.
<u>Blue-Grey Magic.</u>	Sophie Cole.	Mills & Boon, 1910.	7 Sept. 1910, p. 5.
<u>Mr. Dooley Says.</u>	F.P. Dunne.	Heinemann, 1910.	27 Sept. 1910, p. 5.
<u>The Day's Play.</u>	A.A. Milne.	Methuen, 1910.	12 Oct. 1910, p. 5.
<u>Anne Kempburn- Truthseeker.</u>	Marguerite Bryant.	Heinemann, 1910.	19 Oct. 1910, p. 5.
<u>Let the Roof Fall In.</u>	Frank Darby.	Hutchinson, 1910.	2 Nov. 1910, p. 5.
<u>The Unforeseen.</u>	Mary Stewart Cutting.	Hodder & Stoughton, 1910.	30 Nov. 1910, p. 7.
<u>Darwell Stories.</u>	F. Warre Cornish.	Constable, 1910.	28 Dec. 1910, p. 3.
<u>The Passionate Elopement.</u>	Compton Mackenzie.	Secker, 1911.	25 Jan. 1911, p. 4.
<u>Here and Hereafter.</u>	Barry Pain.	Methuen, 1911.	8 Feb. 1911, p. 5.
<u>Historical Plays for Children.</u>	Amice Macdonell.	Allen & Sons, 1911.	16 Feb. 1911, p. 5.
<u>The Bermondsey Twin.</u>	F.J. Randall.	John Lane, 1911.	8 March 1911, p. 5.
<u>Zoe : A Portrait.</u>	W.F. Casey.	Herbert & Daniel, 1911.	5 April 1911, p. 5.
<u>The Phantom of the Opera.</u>	M. Gaston Leroux.	Mills & Boon, 1911.	17 May 1911, p. 7.
<u>The Achievements of John Carruthers.</u>	Sir Edmund Cox.	Constable, 1911.	28 June 1911, p. 5.

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>AUTHOR</u>	<u>PUBLISHER</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<u>No Man's Land.</u>	Louis Joseph Vance.	Grant Richards, 1911.	13 Sept 1911, p. 5.
<u>Sixty-eight Years on the Stage.</u>	Mrs. Charles Calvert.	Mills & Boon, 1911.	15 Sept 1911, p. 5. Headed 'Mrs. Chas. Calvert's Reminiscences'.
<u>Lalage's Lovers.</u>	George A. Birmingham.	Methuen, 1911.	20 Sept. 1911, p. 5. Headed 'Mr. Birmingham's Ireland'.
<u>Thanks to Sanderson.</u>	P. Ridge.	Methuen, 1911.	4 Oct. 1911, p. 5.
<u>The Parting of the Ways.</u>	Louise S. Houghton.	Chatto and Windus, 1911.	ibid.
<u>The Bracknells.</u>	Forrest Reid.	E. Arnold, 1911.	18 Oct. 1911, p. 5. Headed 'The True and the Strange'. Also in <u>The Works</u> , Vol. I. p. xxxv.
<u>Peter and Wendy.</u>	J.M. Barrie.	Hodder & Stoughton, 1911.	20 Oct. 1911, p. 7. Headed 'What happened to Wendy'.
<u>Lorrida's Birthday.</u>	Charles Lee.	Dent, 1911.	1 Nov. 1911, p. 4.
<u>Motley and Tinsel.</u>	John K. Prothero.	Stephen Swift & Co., 1911.	8 Nov. 1911, p. 7.
<u>Old Enough to Know Better.</u>	William Caine.	Greening & Co., 1911.	29 Nov. 1911, p. 7.
<u>Stories in Grey.</u>	Barry Paine.	T. Werner Laurie, 1912.	10 Jan. 1912, p. 4.
<u>Cabbage &amp; Kings.</u>	O. Henry.	Eveleigh Nash, 1912.	31 Jan. 1912, p. 5. Headed 'Patchwork'.
<u>The Mystery of Redmarsh Farm.</u>	Archibald Marshall.	Stanley, Paul & Co., 1912.	14 Feb. 1912, p. 5.
<u>Celtic Stories.</u>	Edward Thomas.	Clarendon Press, 1912.	23 Feb. 1912, p. 7.
<u>Pomander Walk.</u>	Louis N. Parker.	John Lane, 1912.	28 Feb. 1912, p. 7.

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>AUTHOR</u>	<u>PUBLISHER</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<u>Joseph in Jeopardy.</u>	Frank Darby.	Methuen, 1912.	6 March 1912, p. 5.
<u>The Man Who Stroked Cats.</u>	Morley Roberts.	Eveleigh Nash, 1912.	ibid.
<u>Yellowsands.</u>	Adam Gowans Whyte.	Blackwood & Sons, 1912.	10 April 1912, p. 5.
<u>Kingfisher Blue.</u>	Halliwell Sutcliffe.	Smith, Elder & Co., 1912.	8 May 1912, p. 7.
<u>The Permanent Uncle.</u>	Douglas Goldring.	Constable, 1912.	22 May 1912, p. 7.
<u>Through the Ivory Gate.</u>	Reginald Farrer.	Frank Palmer, 1912.	29 May 1912, p. 5.
<u>Impertinent Reflections.</u>	Cosmo Hamilton.	Stanley Paul & Co., 1912.	5 June 1912, p. 5.
<u>Service Yarns and Memories.</u>	Col. C.E. Callwell.	W. Blackwood & Sons, 1912.	12 June 1912, p. 5.
<u>The Green Overcoat.</u>	H. Belloc.	J.W. Arrowsmith, 1912.	3 July 1912, p. 7.
<u>A Slice of Life.</u>	Robert Halifax.	Constable, 1912.	9 Oct. 1912, p. 7.
<u>Molyneux of Mayfair.</u>	Duncan Schwanns.	Heinemann, 1912.	30 Oct. 1912, p. 6.
<u>The House of The Kaid.</u>	John Finnemore.	John Ouseley Ltd., 1912.	27 Nov. 1912, p. 7.
<u>Wo2.</u>	Maurice Drake.	Methuen, 1913.	12 Feb. 1913, p. 5.
<u>Topham's Folly.</u>	George Stevenson.	John Lane, 1913.	12 March 1913, p. 7.

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TOTAL = 63

APPENDIX 6 :

MISCELLANY ARTICLES BY STANLEY HOUGHTON IN  
THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN:

<u>LOCATION</u> <u>DATE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
7 Sept. 1907.	6
14 Dec. 1908.	5
15 June 1909.	5
24 June 1909.	5
14 Oct. 1909.	5
22 Oct. 1909.	5
25 Oct. 1909.	5
22 Dec. 1909.	5
4 May 1910.	5
7 May 1910.	5
8 July 1910.	5
15 Aug. 1910.	5
13 Feb. 1911.	5
15 Feb. 1911.	5
17 Feb. 1911.	7
3 Mar. 1911.	7
11 Mar. 1911.	7
15 Mar. 1911.	7
28 Mar. 1911.	7
17 May 1911.	7
1 Aug. 1911.	7
19 Aug. 1911.	5
19 Sept. 1911.	5
1 July 1912.	7

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TOTAL-24

APPENDIX 7 :

ARTICLES BY STANLEY HOUGHTON IN OTHER NEWSPAPERS:

<u>Newspaper</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Page</u>
<u>Evening News</u> (London)	On writing for Music-Halls.	29 July 1912.	4.
	The Lancashire Wakes.	9 Aug. 1912.	4
	Dialect Plays: Are they successful at home?	20 Aug. 1912.	4
<u>Daily Mail</u>	Family Plays.	2 Sept. 1912	4

APPENDIX 8 :

INTERVIEWS GIVEN BY STANLEY HOUGHTON:

<u>Newspaper</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Page</u>
<u>Manchester Evening Chronicle</u>	6 Sept. 1909	5
<u>Manchester Courier</u>	20 July 1912	7
<u>Daily Dispatch</u>	24 Aug. 1912	4
<u>Daily Chronicle</u>	18 Nov. 1912	5
<u>Daily Mail</u>	3 Dec. 1912	8
<u>Glasgow Evening Times</u>	20 Dec. 1912	4



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2) Books.

1)

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PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Stanley Houghton : 1881 - 1913.
  2. Houghton's birthplace : 1 Amy Villas, Doveston Road, Ashton-on-Mersey, Altrincham, Cheshire.
  3. Houghton's main residence : 2 Athol Road, Alexandra Park, Manchester.
  4. Houghton's flat in Paris : 6 Rue Bobillot (6th Floor), Place d'Italie, Paris.
  5. Caricature by Ernest Marriott.
  6. Caricature by Max Beerbohm : (l. to r.) Granville-Barker, Masefield, Shaw, Galsworthy, Sutro, Pinero, Barrie, Jones, Houghton.
  7. Sketch drawn for The Younger Generation and used on London hoardings (Nov. 1912).
  8. Houghton's hearse arriving at Manchester Crematorium, Southern Cemetery, Barlow Moor Road, on Saturday 13 December 1913.
  9. Houghton's memorial stone at Manchester Crematorium with his father's name below.
  10. Houghton's memorial stone (side view) with his mother's name.
  11. The unveiling ceremony of the Houghton memorial plaque at the Central Free Reference Library, Piccadilly, Manchester on 10 February 1915. The photograph includes Miss Horniman, Arthur Bouchier, Violet Vanbrugh, Mr. and Mrs. Houghton.
  12. The Houghton memorial plaque in its present position (1984) on the 4th floor of the Manchester Central Reference Library, St. Peter's Square.
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1



ograph taken in April, 1913.

Schmidt, Manchu

Stanley Houghton

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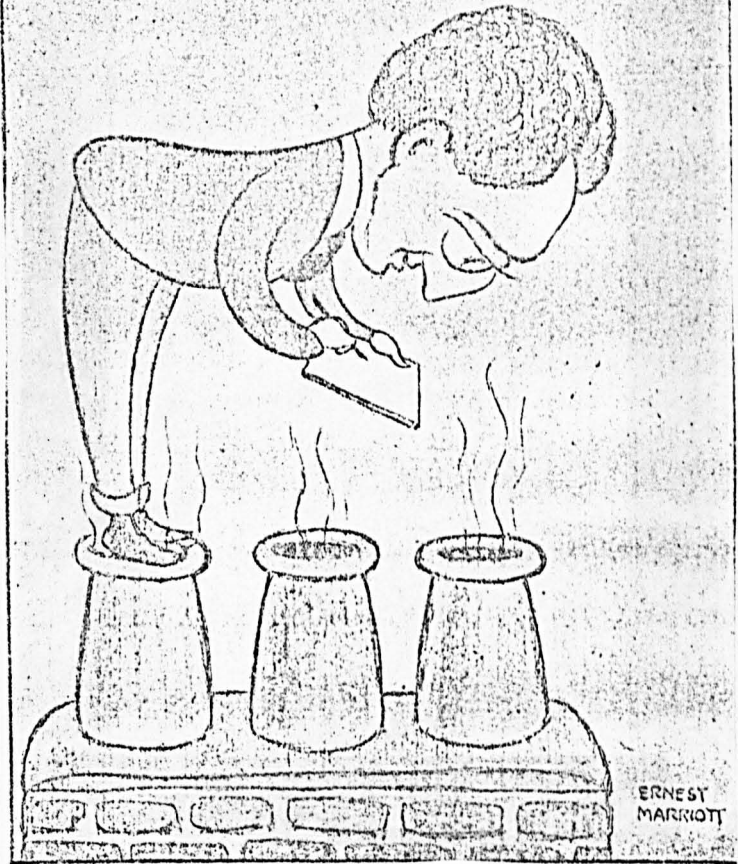


4



5

Mr Stanley Houghton  
nocturnally overhearing  
a fireside conversation  
in Suburbia.



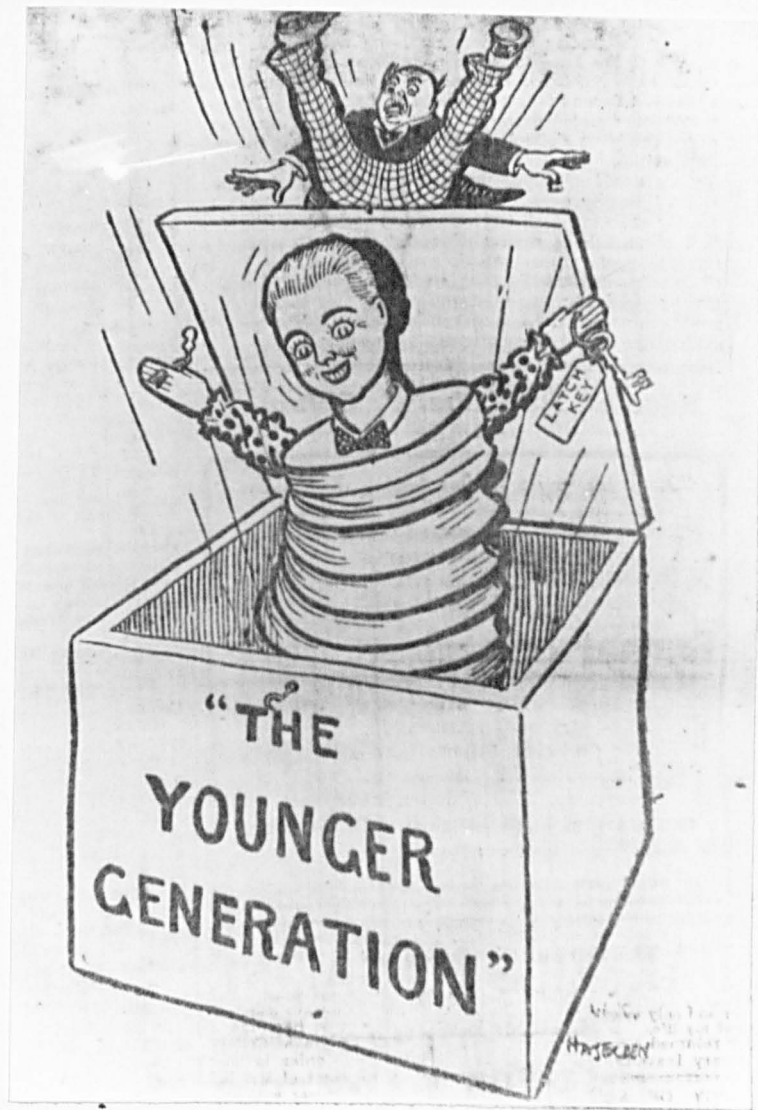
6



MR. STANLEY HOUGHTON.



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